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THE WORLD BANK AS A LEARNING ORGANIZATION: AN ANALYSIS OF HOW THE BANK FUNCTIONS AS AN EDUCATIONAL LENDER TO THE DEVELOPING WORLD

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THE WORLD BANK AS A LEARNING ORGANIZATION:AN ANALYSIS OF HOW THE BANK FUNCTIONS AS AN EDUCATIONAL LENDER TO THE DEVELOPING WORLD.

Abstract

This study uses the concept of the learning organization as a lens through which to examine the education division of the World Bank. The Bank is the largest and most influential single donor to education in the developing world and has been active in the field for over 30 years. It is currently going through a period of review and self-evaluation which makes it timely to consider what sort of organization it is or might become.

The view taken in this study is that organizations which learn will be more effective in what they undertake. The Bank has struggled for years with a reputation as a technicist, positivist institution which believes in market economics as the main vehicle for national development and that formal schooling is best conceived of as the tool of such development. How far this reputation is deserved became a key issue for examination in the study.

The study begins with a discussion of the rationale for the task undertaken, lays out the aims of the exercise and briefly discusses the research questions to be addressed. Theoretical and conceptual orientations and research methodology are indicated.

In Chapter Two the concept of the organization is explored in some depth with particular emphasis on the notion of organizations which learn. The literature is examined and the characteristics of learning organizations are adduced.

Chapter Three discusses the World Bank's educational development division. Its strengths and weaknesses are outlined and its history briefly traced.

Research methodology is the concern of Chapter Four. Qualitative methods based on grounded theory and hermeneutics are the focus and the research techniques adopted for the study are discussed and justified.

The following two chapters present the data gathered, first from

documentary sources and then from interview subjects. The final chapter summarises the findings of the research and draws conclusions. The most important of these is that the theory of the learning organization is insufficiently explicated in the literature. A more refined model of learning organizations is presented as the conclusion of the study.

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To my supervisor, Professor Michael Beveridge, I owe the original idea for this dissertation, deriving from the Ed.D module entitled 'Organizational Behaviour'. His guidance was with the lightest of reins and I acknowledge the wisdom and intelligence he brought to bear on this study. Specific issues he raised in our meetings deserve deeper investigation than this work could sustain. He always provided more than I could manage and the shortcomings of this dissertation are a function of the writer not the supervisor.

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deserve my thanks.

I must also thank my informants, especially those within the Bank, who for reasons of confidentiality must remain anonymous. The World Bank is becoming more accessible and open. It is learning how to reflect upon itself and it is responding not only to criticism but also to its own systems of evaluation. It is to be hoped that its new leadership will continue to work on a change of culture within the organization.

Finally, this dissertation is dedicated to my former research student Professor Li-Juing Wu. The journey on which we travelled together in developing common research ideas was a unique experience. I owe a great deal of my enthusiasm for grounded theory and hermeneutics to her. It is a truism that a teacher is always taught by his or her student. Li-Juing Wu taught me much that goes beyond mere academic work. I owe her thanks which cannot be adequately expressed.

LIST OF TABLES,FIGURES AND ANNEXURES

THE WORLD BANK AS A LEARNING ORGANIZATION: AN ANALYSIS OF HOW THE BANK FUNCTIONS AS AN EDUCATIONAL LENDER TO THE DEVELOPING WORLD

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

> In times of change learners shall inherit the earth, while the learned are beautifully equipped for a world that no longer exists.
>
> James Thurber

1.1. Introduction

This study takes as its focus the workings of the World Bank in its role as lender to international educational development. The Bank has become an increasingly important actor in international education and, although its actual provision of funding is not enormous (20% of all lending to education in the developing world in the 1980s), its influence is all-pervasive (George and Sabelli,1994). This overwhelming influence has come about for a number of reasons. Perhaps the most important is the linking of the Bank's developmental advice with the restructuring of the economies of recipient countries. In short, the Bank lends where it has achieved agreement to an overall shift in the economic policy of the recipient country (World Bank, 1995:152). Hence, its lending to education tends to follow more comprehensive developmental strategies. It has become accepted that although the Bank's loans to education *per se* may be comparatively modest they are always accompanied by more profound and far-reaching interventions.

Given that the Bank is the most highly influential actor in educational development for the so-called Third World it is not surprising that its operations have been the subject of much criticism. Far from being universally perceived as developmental, the Bank is often characterised as anti-developmental, or at least the promoter of economic models of human development which are based on

a narrow perception of the best paths for change (Buchert and King, 1995). This study will show that the World Bank does operate from a narrow ideological commitment to market economics; a view which is buttressed by inadequate gathering, analysis and use of knowledge within and beyond the organization. Its view of improving or accelerating national development can be summed up as the creation of market economies which will initially have some human fall-out but which will eventually take off in the classic Rostowian model of thirty years ago. The Bank's view of economics is not the main focus of the present study but any examination of its educational policies must be set within the framework of its broader activities.

The central concern of this study is whether the Bank learns from its past experience in its involvement with education. The concept of the learning organization (Senge, 1990; Dixon, 1994) will be used to assess the World Bank's capacity for learning and change. Insights will be developed from the learning organization literature against which to compare the Bank's performance. Bank "insiders" as well as critics of the Bank's operations will provide data on the extent to which the organization learns. Major educational policy documents produced by the World Bank since 1974 will also be examined for evidence of learning by the organization. It is expected that the study will yield a useful analysis of the Bank's processes of self evaluation and reflection leading to conclusions concerning its effectiveness as a learning organization. A central issue in this analysis will be the Bank's approach to knowledge and information gathering, processing and dissemination.

1.2. Background and rationale for the study

As noted above, the World Bank has become the dominant influence in lending for educational development in the developing countries. The International Bank for

Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), to give the Bank its full title, came into being in June, 1946. The IBRD is complemented by the International Development Association (IDA) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC). All three bodies are referred to by Jones (1992) as the World Bank 'group' and in this study the term World Bank or 'the Bank' refers to this group of organizations. The specific functions of each agency are dealt with in Chapter Three below.

Given the Bank's dominance, a significant event occurred in 1995 with the publication of their policy document entitled *Priorities and Strategies for Education.* In the past, the Bank has from time to time produced Education Sector Policy papers. The first was issued in 1971 and the last in 1980. Subsequent to the latter date the Bank has tended to produce policy documents on specific sectors within education, rather than a comprehensive world-view. Hence the 1995 paper which had been preceded by a 1994 paper entitled *Higher Education: The Lessons of Experience.* Papers on technical and vocational education, the relationship between nutrition, health and learning, the financing of education and enhancing women's participation in education all appeared between 1980 and 1995. Latterly, sub-titles inclusive of the term "learning from experience" have become more common (see World Bank, 1994a;1994b). The publication of so much policy-related material by the Bank over the past 15 or so years, the rise in its involvement with education from its first loan to Tunisia in 1962 to the US$1.487 billion loaned in 1990 (World Bank, 1995:146) and its professed interest in learning from experience make this an appropriate time to assess whether 'changes in behaviour which are more or less permanent' characterise the Bank as an organization. This aim is made particularly cogent in the light of the following statement referring to the Bank as an organization

...which at bottom brooks no opposition or contradiction and which claims a monopoly on Truth.

(George and Sabelli, 1994:5)

This accusation is made even more damning when the view of truth taken is akin to that criticised by Dixon (1994:1) as consisting in a thorough grasp of what an expert knows. The premises of this conception of knowing are that there is a right answer, that this is known and that if we identify those who know and apply their answers then our problems can be solved. As will be argued in this thesis, the view of knowing embraced by true learning organizations is somewhat different and is illustrated by Dixon as:

1. There are many right answers...there are many ways to reach the same goal.

2. People who are concerned about and affected by a problem are capable of developing useful knowledge to resolve it.

3. Learning occurs in a context of work and praxis, and results from intentional effort.

Dixon (1994:2)

1.3. Aims of the study

The study has a straightforward aim - to assess the extent to which the World Bank is a learning organization. This assessment will be carried out by four main means, interrogation of documents produced by the Bank, examination of published critiques of the Bank's development as an organization lending for educational development, interviewing of Bank staff involved in policy development and project lending and interviewing of critics of the Bank's activities. The concept of the learning organization will be clarified and distilled from alternative but complementary theories to be found in the literature.

1.4. Research questions

The main research questions to be addressed are:

a) How does the Bank function as an organization, particularly in terms of its acquisition, distribution and processing of knowledge ?

b) In what ways has the Bank changed these practices over the past 25 years ?

c) Do these changes match with the characteristics of a learning organization ?

d) Does the concept of the learning organization have relevance to better understanding of the Bank?

e) Is the concept of the learning organization adequate as a theoretical tool or lens ?

These questions are extended and expanded in Chapter Four below and are applied exclusively to that section of the World Bank group which deals with educational development in the developing world.

1.5. Theoretical and conceptual orientation

In seeking clarification of the term 'learning organization' the researcher's experience paralleled that of Sackmann (1991) in her investigation of 'organizational culture'. She notes that the term culture figures large in the business world and the literature suggests that corporate culture influences an organization's success. Yet Sackmann's investigation of the term revealed that 'empirically based knowledge about culture in organizational settings is rather scarce and spotty' (Sackmann, 1991:1). She goes on to illustrate that there are almost as many definitions and understandings of culture as there are writers on the topic. Further, she notes that to some extent these differences have

arisen from the importation of the topic from anthropology. In the same way, the 'learning organization' is open to a great deal of variety in interpretation, partly due to its importation from the psychology of individual human learning. A major problem with the present study has been the pinning down of a very elusive central concept. The concept of the learning organization has been implicit in the literature on management for many years but became more explicit with the publication of Senge's (1990) book *The Fifth Discipline*. Senge suggests that organizations which are to succeed do more than merely adapt to changes in the environment. In his terms, they become **generative** as well as **adaptive** in that they maintain a creative tension between current reality and their vision for the future. Other significant writers in the field such as Whiston (1994), Morgan (1986) and Dixon (1994) develop alternative but complementary theories of the learning organization. They have certain characteristics in common - notably that those organizations which are to survive, grow and become more effective must operate like sentient organisms; they must learn. This learning is no longer a matter of encouraging members of an organization to prepare themselves for the work place in the traditional way. Rather, employees must 'learn their way out of the work problems they address' (Dixon, 1994:4). Dixon goes on to argue that learning creates equals, not subordinates. Management's control tasks have given way to facilitating or creating the environment in which employees can interpret, synthesize, analyse and use information (Dixon, 1994:4). Perelman (1984) suggests that by the turn of the century, three-quarters of the jobs in the U.S. economy will involve creating and processing knowledge, a key process in learning.

The appeal of the idea of a learning organization is multiple. First, organizations, especially in education, will be encouraged that they do not have to merely wait for things to happen to them. They can be proactive or

generative. Secondly, likening an organization to an individual human organism provides a rich field of metaphor (see Morgan, 1986). As Hoyle (1995) has suggested, the concept of the learning organization also provides possible solutions to the 'hour glass' problem of the narrow linkage between management activities and the functions of the organization.

In addition it will be argued that the concept provides a valuable lens through which the effectiveness of an organization may be assessed. The argument of this study is that a powerful organization is at work in the world exercising great power and influence over educational policies which will affect the lives of millions. How does this organization function ? What processes and procedures ensure that the organization is reflective, adaptive, generative ? Are these the qualities and characteristics most appropriate to an international development agency ? What values does the organization embrace anyway ? Are they simplistic and positivistic, embracing the view that educational development problems are merely technical issues requiring technical solutions - getting to know what the experts know ? Are they more sophisticated, revealing a deeper understanding of what the real world is like and how it works ? The concept of the learning organization has been selected as a useful tool for digging a little deeper into how the World Bank's educational arm functions.

Hoyle (1995) refers to the learning organization as a metaphor, arguing that a metaphor captures in a word or two some essential aspect of what is a complex phenomenon, an organization. Hoyle suggests that "any metaphor is but one way of apprehending the totality of an organization and different views of the complexity can be achieved by deploying more than one metaphor" (Hoyle, 1995:1). Morgan (1986) devotes a substantial book to the exploration of various metaphors of the organization - as machines, as organisms, as brains, cultures, political

systems and so on. Aspects of his analysis are represented in this study as the Bank could be viewed through the lens of any of Morgan's metaphors,particularly that of the instrument of domination, or even as a psychic prison for its staff. Suffice it to say that whether the learning organization is a metaphor or merely a descriptor, various of its interpretations are used in this study as tools for examining the organization called the World Bank. It should also be noted that an important dimension of the literature on the learning organization reflects a concern with the metaphysical aspects of such organizations. There are numerous suggestions within the literature that 'something extra' happens when the true learning organization gets under way (see Dixon, 1994 and Argyris,1993). This approach is linked in the study with the concept of organizational culture.

1.6. Research Methodology

Research methods employed in this study are semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis. In themselves, these are merely approaches and must be located in a methodology which itself must be grounded in an epistemology. If there is a hierarchy implicit in the terms methods, methodology and epistemology then methods are at the lowest level. They are merely the techniques utilised. Whether they are suitable techniques depends on the methodology selected - that is, the justificatory arguments put forward on behalf of the methods chosen. These arguments depend on the epistemology underpinning the study - the view of what constitutes "warrantable knowledge" in Bryman's phrase (Bryman, 1988). John Vaizey (1972:14) has argued, "If a thing cannot be measured then it probably does not exist" - a positivist epistemology if ever there were one. Other social scientists would argue that multiple realities exist, not one Archimedian point against which the world might be levered or measured. Given this epistemological view, grounded theory has been taken as a methodological

approach. Grounded theory demands that the data generated in a study supply theoretical understanding. A more positivist view suggests that selected theory is the starting point to test which relevant data are gathered. Glaser and Strauss, the fathers of grounded theory, would argue that such starting points are restrictive especially where understanding is sought rather than numerical analysis. Critics of grounded theory would characterise the approach as lacking rigour and being too dependent on the subjective views and opinions of the researcher. Therefore, to strengthen the grounded theory approach this study includes hermeneutics in its analysis of the data gathered. Hermeneutics, a method of interpreting data, emphasises the process of developing a bridge or rapprochement between present understanding and the world we seek to appraise. This process is referred to as "fusion of horizons" in the literature on hermeneutics. Within this process there are appeals to evidence, there is testing and criticism of hypotheses (Follesdal, 1979).

In summary it can be said that the present study seeks understanding of phenomena rather than measurement. It accepts that knowledge springs from the interaction of the object or phenomena being researched and the culturally shaped researcher. Objectivity and subjectivity are not opposite poles on a continuum. The best that can be hoped for is a form of objectivity in which the work has been opened up to criticism. The evidence presented will have withstood serious scrutiny (Phillips, 1993). The starting point for the study is the concept of the learning organization. If grounded theory and hermeneutics are to be applied to the investigation it may well be that a new view of the learning organization emerges.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL ORIENTATION; THE CONCEPT OF THE LEARNING ORGANIZATION

Adapt or die....you ANC nothing yet

Johannesburg graffito, 1990.

2.1. Introduction

It was noted in introducing this study that the World Bank as an organization involved in educational development was the focus of attention. It is therefore necessary to examine the concept of an organization before much further analysis can be engaged in. The literature on organizations is extensive and eclectic. A summary of its main concepts and principles follows in section 2.2. below.

Even more important for the study's analysis of the World Bank's activities is the concept of the **learning organization.** The idea that organizations can and indeed must learn in order to survive and grow is of relatively recent origin. That individuals can and do learn is a commonplace. The idea that an organization *per se* may have a learning capacity in addition to the sum of the learning capacity demonstrated by the individuals within it is a challenging proposition explored further in 2.3. below.

If learning organizations exist, by what criteria can they be identified ? Are there common traits or characteristics which identify all learning organizations, or is the concept more elastic than this? The chapter then examines how learning organizations might be identified.

Finally, this chapter raises the fundamental research question of where to look for evidence of the existence of the characteristics of a learning organization in a set-up like the World Bank. In short, it may be quite possible

to identify plausible characteristics of a learning organization and apply these insights to the organization under investigation. However, if the researcher is looking in the wrong places or at the wrong kind of evidence then 'not proven' becomes the only acceptable verdict.

2.2. The notion of the organization

2.2.1. What is an organization?

Argyris and Schon (1978) suggest that a group becomes an organization when its members develop procedures for:

- making decisions in the name of the collective
- delegating to individuals the authority to act for the collective
- setting boundaries between the collective and the rest of the world.

The term organization as a descriptor for groups of individuals clustered together for some common purpose, whether it be an army, a small business or a political party, is relatively unproblematic. If the term is broadened to include the idea that the activities of the group are rational, goal-directed, systematic and efficiently managed then important distinctions between organizations may be drawn. Organizations cannot be defined fully in terms of their structure. Context and function become important.

2.2.2.How do organizations function ?

Morgan suggests that organizations arise

> *..out of a conscious decision on the part of an individual or group to achieve certain goals through the bringing together in a disciplined fashion of human and material resources.*
>
> (Morgan, 1990:4)

It is further argued that a characteristic of organizations is that the whole becomes more than merely the sum of the parts. As Morgan (1990) puts it, the act of coming together into an organization increases our capacities geometrically, not merely arithmetically. This assertion provides justification for a view of the learning organization which is more metaphysical than metaphorical (see 2.3.4. below).

Morgan goes on to distinguish organizations from social institutions and social movements. Organizations are characterised by constant monitoring of means and ends, rare in other social institutions such as the family. Social movements in Giddens' (1984) terms are enterprises devoted to the establishment of a new order of life. They do not operate with fixed locales and 'positioning within them does not have the clarity of definition associated with "roles"' (Giddens, 1984:204). Given these definitions there is no doubt that the World Bank qualifies as an organization in Morgan's terms.

Implicit in the definition of an organization is its function in terms of bringing individuals and resources together in a controlled way in order to achieve goals unattainable by the individual alone. Sociologists have long been interested in how the organizations we now have arose, how they differ from each other and what alternative types of organization we can invent. Morgan (1990:6) refers to these as the historical, anthropological and critical sensitivities. The present study falls clearly into the last category in the sense that the analysis presented seeks through its critique of the Bank to invent alternatives within the organization. Reed (1992) sees the development of formal bureaucratic organizations as a key development in the transition from earlier social relations to industrial societies. The bureaucratic organization became 'a primary institutional carrier of modernization' (Reed, 1992:1). As an outcome of the

development of organizations in society the instrumental rationality characteristic of them has extended into every area of life, economic, social, political and cultural. Bureaucratic organizations have become the main institutional expression of instrumental rationality.

2.2.3. How are organizations analyzed ?

Morgan argues that the central issue in the study of organizations is the tension between individuals with their own goals and interests and the organization as a structure (Morgan, 1990:7). Even this can be misleading as there is no such thing as the organization without its individual actors who induce system-like qualities in the organization. Morgan goes on:

> *..the key issue remains the way in which organizations seek to control the potential disorganization within themselves that is inescapable from their nature as socially constructed phenomena, and to utilize human resources in a directed and co-ordinated fashion in order to achieve objectives.*
>
> (Morgan, 1990:8)

As Handy puts it:

> *...organizations are political systems, not simply collections of individuals;....the relationships... grouped under power are the principal linking mechanisms which turn those collections of individuals into purposive systems.*
>
> (Handy,1985:21)

People, power and politics are identified by Handy as key terms in understanding organizations.

Any study of the notion of the organization demands an acknowledgement of the classical theorists. This should not delay the present study too much as it is not the writer's purpose to 'prove' the validity of the concept of the

organization. That organizations exist as social phenomena is a given. However, classical views, such as those of Marx, who held that all organizations need to be understood in terms of the underlying class conflicts inherent in capitalism, or those of Weber, must be touched upon. Max Weber's concept of the rational-legal bureaucracy as the fundamental change agent which gave rise to capitalism and industrialism is central to his sociology. The rise of the rational-legal bureaucracy can be traced to its technical superiority over other forms of organization and Weber likens it to the superiority of the machine over non-mechanical approaches to production (Morgan, 1990:10).

Later theorists such as Merton, Gouldner and Perrow built on Weber's work but focused more sharply on limited, empirically based questions rather than on broad generalizations. Researchers in a more quantitative tradition, notably the Aston Group in Britain, argued that Weber's standard criteria for bureaucracies did not always combine in the same way. Their development of quantitative measures of organizational structure and their correlation with aspects of environment and performance to measure the 'fit' of an organization with its environment, provided additional perspectives on the study of organizations. The comparative study of organizations benefited particularly from the principles adduced by the Aston Group and U.S. writers like Lawrence and Lorsch (1967). The apparently rigorous quantitative approach of the Aston Group and its adherents persuaded some authorities to claim that it was the only way to study organizations. In fact, according to Morgan (1990), the joint influence of U.S. studies of bureaucracy and the work of the Aston Group created a sub-discipline within which organizations could be studied in their own right rather than as sub-sets of wider social analyses.

In reaction to the glut of quantitative material produced in organizational

theory in the 1960s and 1970s, more radical and critical theorists emerged. Writers like Burrell and Morgan (1979), Cooper and Burrell (1988) and Clegg and Dunkerley (1979) attacked the current orthodoxy in a number of ways. In his later work, Clegg has expanded his concern for issues of class, control and political economy by examining the importance of different social settings for class formation and organizational transformation (Clegg, 1994). The very title of Clegg's 1994 book, *Frameworks of Power*, illustrates the focus of much current writing on organizations and the dominance of the work and ideas of Foucault (1980) in present analyses of organizations. The theoretical arguments remain powerful between the more orthodox and the more critical writers, leaving the sociology of organizations in something of a state of flux (Morgan,1990:13).

Reed (1992) provides a useful summary of current dominant views of how organizations may be conceptualized. Each of the analytical frameworks reviewed by Reed focuses on a different problem to provide a basis for their conceptual development. Systems theory is mainly concerned with the adaptation of internal organizational structures to a changing external reality (Morgan, 1986). The matching of internal design to external conditions will lead to maximum operational efficiency and strategic effectiveness. The negotiated order perspective begins farther back. Instead of taking pre-existing structures for granted the social processes through which organizations are constructed and maintained are the focus of attention. This view presumes that structures have to be worked at and continually reconstructed through social interaction. The power and domination framework focuses on the political and economic realities through which organizational control is maintained. The starting point is the mechanisms of control necessary to regulate conflicts of interest. These mechanisms are seen as reflections of ideological domination and economic power at work in the macro-

context. The cultural / symbolic framework rejects the reductionism implicit in the power and domination perspective. Culture is what the organization is, not what it has. The belief systems and ideologies of such an organization sustain a collective sense of identity. In this respect it sets itself apart from structural frameworks which tend to reify the organization. Rather, it offers a view of organizations which emphasises the descriptive and explanatory significance of cultural enactment, social constructions reproduced through their members' modes of thinking and acting. Symbolic creation and cultural enactment become 'the constitutive processes of organizational existence' (Reed,1992:121). The practice perspective draws attention to the mechanisms by which social agencies and the resources that feed into organizations come together to create coherent and viable collectives. The explanatory significance of wider structures of economic and political power in regulating organizations is an important focus of this perspective. Reed summarises his analysis by illustrating the development of theory on organizational analysis since the 1950s. He shows the shift from orthodox systems thinking to perspectives derived from the viewpoint of those who are subject to the control of dominant groups. The struggle for power and control has become a focus for analysis. The social construction of organizational reality is seen as the primary point of reference. The environment is no longer seen as an independent process that imposes itself on decision makers and the structures they invent. It is now regarded as a resource to be manipulated and interpreted by dominant groups within organizations.

2.2.4. Why are organizations important ?

The development of formal organizations was a key factor in the transition towards industrialization and modernization (Reed, 1992). The combination of cognitive instrumentality, moral anonymity and technical effectiveness which

secure a social order based on rational calculation and control characterize bureaucratic organization. However, this clinical analysis bears only a partial likeness to reality. The arguments of writers like Reed suggest that bureaucratic organization hardly existed before Western industrialism transformed the world. However, the system of governance of the ancient Chinese, the highly bureaucratized Egyptian and Roman empires and even the early Christian church all carried the hallmarks of what would be understood in modern terms as organizations. Reed's main point is that the notion of organization has become synonymous with modern social life in all aspects. Whether we consider the transition from local herbal remedies to the National Health Service or from education at mother's knee to modern schooling, the organization has largely taken over as the context within much of what we do is conducted. Yet the instrumental rationality which typifies bureaucratic organizations is much less rigid and predictable than Reed would have us believe. In short, organizations form a patchwork which surround us and incorporate us from the Welfare State to the golf club or the international charity raising money for the blind. Bureaucracy, in its true rather than pejorative sense, is the preferred mode of functioning for these organizations. Instrumental rationality is implicit in the functioning processes. But organizations may fail. They may rise and fall. They may not always accomplish their goals. Their usefulness may diminish. They may be misguided. They may be misdirected. They may change and reconstitute themselves. They may be less predictable than was hoped for. The World Bank is often regarded as monolithic but the same caveats must apply to any discussion of its functioning as an organization. Because they are important, organizations need to be analyzed, monitored, subjected to scrutiny. Ways must be found to challenge them and to improve them.

2.3. The concept of the learning organization.

This study is based on the premise that something called a learning organization can be shown to exist. That the literature is full of references to the learning organization is insufficient evidence for its validity, in the sense that the term has some real or metaphorical meaning (see Table 1.below). First then some space must be devoted to an analysis of what is meant by the learning organization.

The immediate starting point must be a discussion of the differences between an organization which is full of individuals with the capacity to learn and an organization which is thought to be able to learn independently of or in addition to the sum of individual learning within it. There is little debate about the validity of the first type of organization and much good work has been done in organizational development by encouraging individuals within organizations to maximise their learning opportunities and potential. Greater difficulty is experienced when discussing the second type of organization, difficulties which are analogous to the debate concerning the 'ethos' of a school, the 'culture' of an organization, or more demandingly, whether computers can actually think for themselves, independently of their hardware capabilities and the software introduced into them. Argyris and Schon go so far as to state:

there is no organizational learning without individual learning, and that individual learning is a necessary but insufficient condition for organizational learning.

(Argyris and Schon,1978:20)

Dixon (1994:34) takes this assertion a little further. She defines learning, in an adaptation from Kolb (1984) as

...interpreting what we experience in the world; we each create our own unique interpretation; the meaning we create mediates our actions.

Using the work of McClellan, Dixon goes on to discuss the relationship among the private meaning structures of individuals, the accessible meaning structures, which they may make available to others, and collective meaning structures which are those learned elements which 'organizational members hold jointly with other members of the organization' (Dixon, 1994:39). Her construction of a learning organization is based on a deep interaction between these structures which she illustrates as concentric circles, the collective being at the centre, the private at the periphery. A key concept for Dixon is:

> *Organizational learning is strengthened by making more of individuals' private meaning structures accessible so that they can influence other members, as well as by making the collective meaning structures accessible so that they can be tested and altered. In either situation the need is to make the meaning structures accessible to others so they can be exchanged and examined. To accomplish that requires systematic processes, a culture that supports collective learning, and skills and knowledge that facilitate collective learning.*
>
> (Dixon, 1994:43)

Dixon seems to suggest that given the right conditions any organization can become a learning organization, one which *is 'distinguished by its capacity to create knowledge* (my emphasis) through the transformation of experience', to paraphrase Kolb (1984). Indeed, she states that by following a specified organizational learning cycle, organizations can transform themselves (Dixon,1994:8). So far, so unexceptionable. But Dixon's approach does not explicitly suggest that organizations as collectives necessarily learn for themselves. She gets states:

When a critical mass of individuals have altered their meaning structures,the new meaning structures become collective.

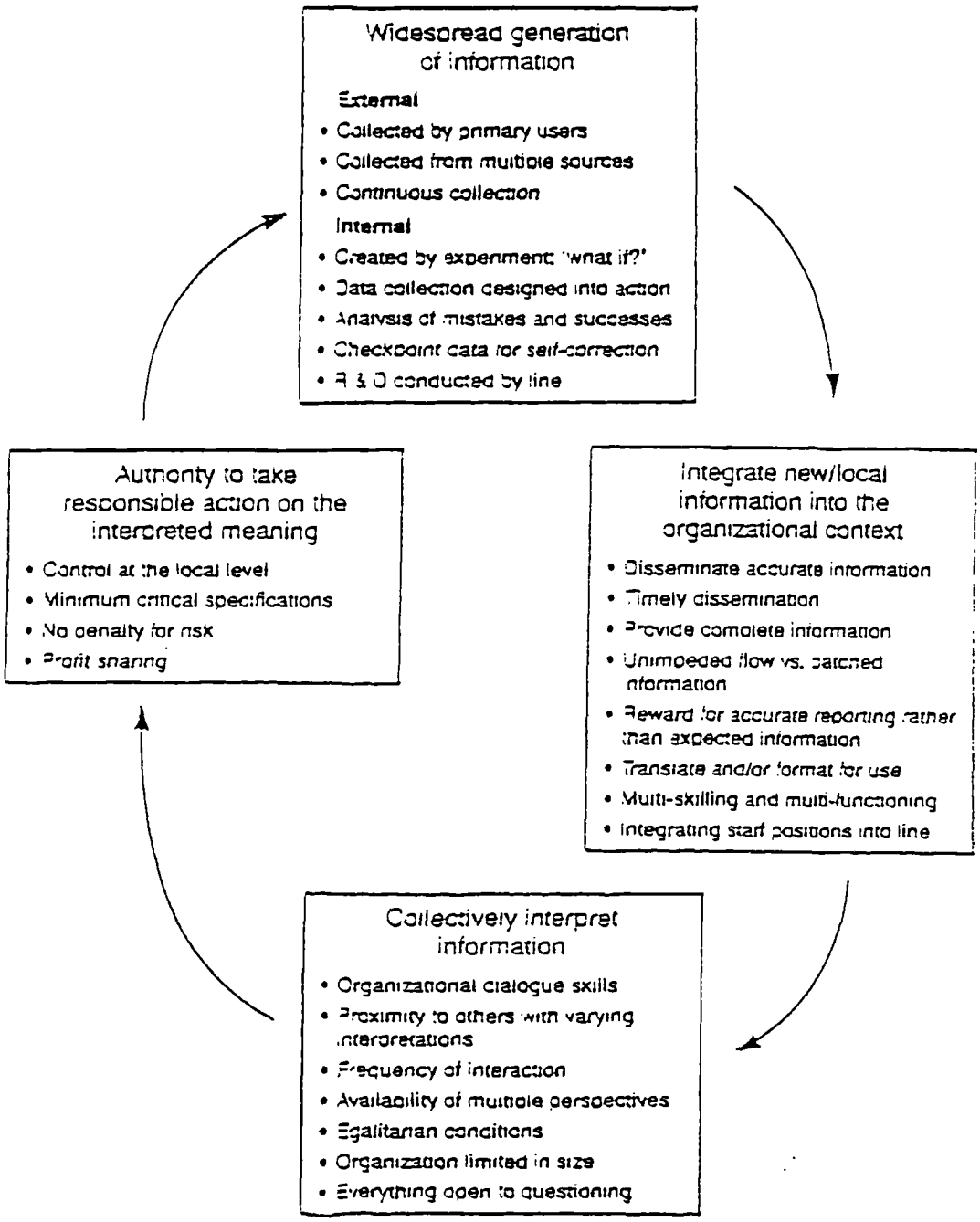
(Dixon, 1994:41)

This statement is somewhat akin to Stephen Jay Gould's assertion that, 'change occurs in large leaps following a slow accumulation of stresses that a system resists until it reaches the breaking point', (Gould, 1980). In other words, both authorities suggest that an in-built will or force is at work to bring about change. This metaphysical issue is picked up in section 2.5. below.

Learning is broadly defined as a change in behaviour which is more or less permanent. Change and learning are not necessarily synonymous in the individual's psychology. This is true for organizations. It is possible for an organization to change - by being privatized for example, yet to learn very little from the experience. Therefore it must be argued that change alone does not produce learning. Dixon would certainly agree with this. She suggests that learning only occurs in an organization if a structured organizational learning cycle is in place (Dixon, 1994:70). A useful diagram is presented by Dixon in which she combines a learning cycle with an experiential cycle. Key stages in the cycle include the widespread generation of information, the integration of new or local information into the organization, the collective interpretation of information and the authority to act on the interpreted meaning (Dixon 1994:70). Explicit in Dixon's schema are the collection of information by primary users from multiple sources, analysis of mistakes and successes, unimpeded flow of information, multi-skilling of staff, everything being open to question, no penalties for risks and 'profit' sharing in its broadest sense. Her diagram is reproduced as Figure 1 on page 21. What Dixon has to say, based on analysis of successful organizations,

gure 1

e Organizational Learning Cycle



n Dixon (1994)

offers more than a formula for better functioning. There are key issues for organizational culture implicit in such statements as the creation of knowledge by experiment, what she refers to as the 'what if ?'strategy. Even more important for an organization like the World Bank is Dixon's requirement for rewards for accurate reporting rather than expected information. The availability of multiple perspectives is seen by Dixon as crucial in the collective interpretation of information. As will be seen in Chapter 3 below, this represents a major problem in current Bank functioning. Dixon's approach offers a rich model for analysis of the Bank and will be returned to when other writers who have useful insights into what is meant by a learning organization are discussed.

Senge (1990) goes so far as to say that organizations only learn as much as the individuals within them learn. He describes learning organizations as:

> *organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together.*
>
> *(Senge, 1990:15)*

This is more of a formula for getting a company moving and indeed, his title of "The Fifth Discipline" clearly focuses on management's task in developing a learning organization. Whiston (1994) on the other hand, takes a far more technological view of the learning organization. If Senge is more concerned with democratizing the work place such that the 'collective genius' of the organization is utilized to the full and that all members are engaged in developing the governing ideas, Whiston is far more interested in developing what he calls 'spare capacity' in individuals and the organization. Only when spare capacity has been created is there room for organizational learning to occur. Senge's work

is based heavily on a humanistic model with recurring resonances from John Dewey. Negotiated orders and cultural/symbolic organizations would appear to be his preferred environments. Whiston is a product of the cybernetic age and his model reflects this clearly with its emphasis on algorithms, channel capacity and information processing. Morgan (1986) examines a number of metaphors for organizations as brains, as organisms, as machines and so on. One of his most persuasive models is his image of an organization as flux and transformation. This metaphor has obvious connections with the concept of the learning organization as developed in this study. Characteristics of both permanence and change are to be found in such organizations (Morgan, 1986: 233ff).

2.4. Defining values and typical practices

In analyzing the selected literature on the concept of the learning organization, two important dimensions present themselves as characteristic of these entities, whether metaphorical or metaphysical. First are what may be termed the 'Defining Values', those principles by which the organization lives and which illuminate all aspects of its functioning. Secondly, learning organizations are characterized by 'Typical Practices', those activities which are integral to the operation of a learning organization and which distinguish it from less effective organizations. These dimensions are illustrated in Table 1 on page 24 below. This analysis does not seek to reduce the concept to a formula in the sense that any organization displaying these characteristics automatically becomes a learning organization, reminiscent of trait theories of leadership. Rather, the characteristics described are presented as a 'cognitive map' or set of signposts against which organizations might measure progress. An important aspect of this theorizing is that in some cases the principles are apparently contradictory, both between the authorities and within the work of one theorist.

TABLE 1

Characteristics of Learning Organisations

Adapted from Senge (1990), Morgan (1986), Whiston (1994) and Dixon (1994)

	Senge	Whiston	Morgan	Dixon
Defining Values	Collective genius of the organisation harnessed by design. Creative tension maintained between vision and current reality. Governing ideas of purpose, vision and core values designed into the organisation. Structures and strategies represent institutional embodiment of purpose. Structural/systemic issues are more important than events or patterns of behaviour.	Patterned performance the aim. Informational overload/underload affect learning. Algorithms replace heuristics. Spare capacity the key concept for organisational learning.	Openness and reflectivity the norm. Legitimate error and uncertainty acceptable. Situations perceived as complex and problematic. Goals allowed to emerge rather than being imposed ~ enquiry driven action. Constraints and limitations are defined and challenged. Open to enquiry and self-criticism.	Attempts to make sense of the world. Purposeful social system. Enabling environment created. Information generated and manipulated through transformation of experience. Responsible action based on interpreted meaning. Shared meaning structures.
Typical Practices	All members engage in developing governing ideas. Thinking and acting integrated at all levels. Creative ideas developed everywhere in advance of problems arising. Continuous feedback and experimentation built into the organisation's activities. New ways of looking at the world encouraged. Management fosters strategic thinking at all levels.	Information absorption must be as effective as possible. Channel capacity a key concept. Selective attention raises performance levels. Task diversification raises performance levels. Parallel information processing superior to sequential approaches to learning. Patterned performance allows refining of skills, creates spare capacity.	Negative events seen as sources of knowledge and wisdom of practical value. Differing viewpoints embraced for problem-solving. Constructive conflict allowable. Has capacity to sense, monitor and scan the environment. Relates findings to guiding norms. Initiates corrective action. Reflects on own norms and constraints.	Knowledge contributed by all members in a planned and intentional way. Systematic processes create meaning. Widespread generation of information. Integration of information into the organisation. Collective interpretation of information.
Key Concepts	Participatory; democratic; creative	System-based; procedural; informational	Participatory; action-based; informational	Informational; meaningful; participatory

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2.5. Summarizing the characteristics of learning organizations

Defining values themselves may be summarised from Senge, Whiston and Morgan and Dixon as involving reflectivity, coherence and positive orientation. Senge and Morgan are particularly strong on reflectivity, arguing that openness and reflectivity are the norms in learning organizations and that reflection on norms and subsequent self-criticism are important values in such organizations. Coherence figures in both writers' analyses and also in the work of Whiston. Whiston suggests that 'patterned performance' creates the space for spare capacity, that algorithms which 'guarantee' an answer by means of a formula, replace heuristics or 'rule of thumb' solutions to problems. In consonance with this Senge suggests that structural and systemic issues become more important in the learning organization than events or patterns of behaviour. More important still are the attempts by learning organizations to address their constraints and limitations, to define and challenge them. To do this the 'collective genius' of the organization is harnessed by design and at all levels. Defining values are built into the organization so that coherence of purpose and process is commonplace. Coherence is further enhanced through the design of structures and strategies which will clearly embody institutional purposes. Positive orientation is demonstrated by using negative events and legitimate errors as learning opportunities. Spare capacity is deliberately created and goals emerge rather than being imposed. Learning organizations view the operational situation as complex and problematic. They expect challenges and difficulties. As Dixon in particular emphasises, the use of knowledge and information becomes a key factor in effective organizational learning.

These defining values are open to a good deal of debate. There are, for example, inherent contradictions in allowing goals to emerge whilst building

defining values into the organization. Those values must be constantly under review whilst maintaining structures and strategies which embody institutional purpose. An examination of the typical practices of learning organizations may serve to clarify these apparent contradictions.

Typical practices of learning organizations may be categorised as involving democratization,creativity, feedback and the development of specific techniques. Democratization appears as a strong characteristic in learning organizations as perceived by Morgan and Senge. This view reflects Dixon's model of the sharing of private, accessible and collective meaning structures (Dixon, 1994:37). Learning organizations typically engage all members in developing governing ideas. Creative ideas are developed everywhere in the organization in advance of problem solving. Strategic thinking is developed at all levels. Creativity in learning organizations is encouraged through practices which integrate thinking and acting at all levels, rather than leaving the 'brains' of the organization to think whilst the 'hands' do the work. New ways of looking at the world are encouraged in learning organizations and differing viewpoints or constructive conflict are embraced for problem solving. A key practice in true learning organizations is the building in of continuous feedback from the organization's activities.

Whiston's (1994) more technological approach to the learning organization is rich in specific techniques. He argues that task diversification raises performance levels and that selective attention is a valuable technique in learning. Allied to these ideas is the notion that parallel information processing is more effective than sequential approaches, good news for all those with countless unfinished tasks on their desks and in their diaries. Whiston emphasises the importance of communication in organizations and this aspect of

organizational learning has long been recognized as vital. The organization which does not pay attention to issues like information overload or underload, rates of information absorption and the 'channel capacity' of key staff will underachieve in learning terms.

This latter section of the argument has moved into the realm of principles and techniques by which a certain type of organization may be achieved. As noted earlier, Dixon (1994) has a neat schema for this, suggesting that the breaking down of barriers between the private, the accessible and the collective meaning structures in organizations will bring about organizational learning. This process will be facilitated by the widespread generation of information within and for the organization, the integration of new or local information into the organizational context and the collective interpretation of information. The final process for ensuring organizational learning will be the arrangement of authority at all levels to take responsible action based on that interpreted meaning (see Figure 1 on page 20 above).

A genre of management texts has grown up somewhere between the academic offering and the station book-stall type of management text. Catchy titles like *The Rise of the Expert Company* (Feigenbaum et.al. 1988) and *Liberation Management* (Peters, 1992) offer rules of thumb and case histories plus sound references to research and theory. But such rules of thumb, exemplars and strategies need to be clearly located within broader frameworks. Referring again to Table 1 above, it can be seen that the twin keys of **participation** and **information** characterise the literature examined.

However, another issue to be addressed lies beyond the metaphorical use of the term 'learning organization' in the form of what has been called the metaphysical position on learning organizations. Dixon appears to believe in the

'something extra' theory of learning organizations. For example, she states:

> *When we reframe learning as a collective as well as an individual capability, we amplify its power.*
>
> (Dixon, 1994:xix)

This appears to go beyond mere techniques for mobilising workers to be more orientated towards learning. Hoyle (1995) takes issue with the 'something extra' theorists. He states,

> *Organizational learning can be unhelpful if it leads to the attribution to the organization of system properties which are in some ways independent of the members.*
>
> (Hoyle, 1995:3)

In the same paper Hoyle goes on to argue that,

> *Insofar as organizations are systems they are such only to a limited extent. They are ultimately human inventions.....there are no compelling grounds for hypothesizing a system which is independent of human agency.*
>
> (Hoyle, 1995:5)

In this Hoyle may well be right. Yet the metaphysical camp does not envisage learning taking place **independent** of human agency. Perhaps the nearest comparison we can make is to what the psychologists refer to as 'Insight' or more popularly, the 'Aha!' experience. Suddenly, that which was not known or understood is apprehended. Ratiocination has not produced understanding but some combination of events has occurred leading to the breakthrough. In a somewhat similar way, psychologists have sought explanation for what appears to happen spontaneously within a crowd, or even a mob. Human agency is there. What happens is not independent of it. Individuals may be identified who were prime movers, but the question remains of why a crowd suddenly supports,

rejects, attacks, protects, turns violent, becomes docile. There is something more than the sum of individual motivations and desires at work.

2.6. Understanding learning organizations

So far this discussion has looked at the concept of the organization, has reviewed contrasting theoretical approaches to the learning organization and has now to address the question of whether organizations learn or whether their individual members learn. The five models put forward by Reed suggest widely differing environments within which organizations may operate. Within an organization different sections or units may reflect different organizational types. A university for example probably includes all five. Learning organizations may be similarly disparate although Dixon suggests that democratization of knowledge within organizations is the key factor in making them learning organizations (Dixon, 1994:129). That learning organizations do not simply happen seems to be clear from the earlier analysis. They have to be worked at and there are many useful models and techniques available. What remains unresolved is the major issue of the 'something extra'. Successful learning organizations do seem to have an additional element in them which goes beyond the sum of the parts. A recent (December 1995) BBC 2 programme on the John Lewis Partnership explored the peculiar nature of that organization, the largest successful commercial experiment in 'capitalism with a human face' ever attempted. There is something special about being a partner in the John Lewis organization although the programme made clear that not all employees were equally enamoured of this specialness. Dixon quotes the case of an American company, owned by Ralph Stayer, who used the analogy of geese in flight to redirect his company. 'The geese, he surmised, have a common goal. Each takes turn leading, and most importantly, each of the geese is responsible for its own performance' (Dixon, 1994:61). There is something more

in the migratory behaviour of geese than the actions of a set of individuals. In his history of the Rifle Brigade, Arthur Bryant frequently refers to *esprit de corps*, that quality which distinguished the Green Jackets from other regiments (Bryant,1972). The examples of something extra in human organizations are manifold. The question remains of how it can be apprehended. There seems no doubt that some organizations have all the right ingredients, procedures, techniques and yet nothing extraordinary happens. Professional soccer teams provide a good example. Other organizations, like IBM or Microsoft, become major players in world affairs. Perhaps Vaizey's dictum, 'If it cannot be measured it probably does not exist' (Vaizey, 1972) needs to be balanced by the assertion that some of the most important things in human life and organizations certainly exist but so far defy attempts to measure them.

Krech et al (1962) refer to the sentiments above as the 'institutional fiction'. The group transcends the immediate members or the real properties of the group. We perceive groups or organizations in a particular way - Japanese manufacturers are all efficient, British labour unions are always recalcitrant - and these stereotypes become part of our belief systems. Within groups, beliefs develop regarding the superior nature of the organization. The work on groups by the social psychologists is extensive and has useful contributions to make to the examination of the learning organization. However, it is to the work of the organizational culture analysts that the argument now turns.

2.7. Culture and the learning organization

Organizational culture is a large topic and one which cannot be explored fully here. Suffice it to say that in organizations, the term culture should be reserved for the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs shared by the members of the organization. These usually operate unconsciously in defining in a taken-for-

granted manner an organization's view of itself in relation to the environment (Johnson and Gill,1993). Schein defines culture as:

> *a pattern of basic assumptions - invented, discovered or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems...* (Schein, 1985:9)

This statement seems to carry resonance for the issue of organizational learning. Culture is learned. Schein likens culture more to what Argyris and Schon (1974) call 'theories in use' and notes that they are more difficult to identify than values and practices within an organization. Johnson and Gill's discussion of organizational culture is well summarised as follows :

- *cultures are produced interactively and can therefore only be changed interactively;*
- *the quality of the interaction will be reflected in the quality of the relationships and the dialogue within and among different interest groups and sub-cultures, both within and outside the organization;*
- *cultural adaptation and change is, therefore, a network development process. The network, not the formal authority structure, is the basic unit of cultural production and adaptation.*

(Johnson and Gill, 1993:110)

The concept of organizational culture seems to hold promise for the development of learning organizations. By linking the concepts of organizational culture and the learning organization we begin to square the circle of whether the learning organization is just another useful metaphor or whether it holds a metaphysical quality as well. They are not mutually exclusive. Just as theologians have had to

wrestle with concepts like 'faith' and 'belief', and without reifying them have been able to explore them fruitfully, social scientists should not be afraid of the metaphysical qualities inherent in terms like organizational culture or the learning organization. If organizational culture carries with it more than a whiff of institutional fiction this is not necessarily a bad thing. Some of our most important human activities are bound up in myth in the Jungian sense, mythology which 'formulates the life of archetypes' (Evans, 1976). For the purposes of the present study the key issue of the role of knowledge in organizational culture and in the development of learning organizations provides common ground to bring the two concepts together.

2.8 Fusion of horizons - knowledge and culture in organizations

2.8.1. Culture and knowledge

The concept of 'fusion of horizons' is discussed more fully in Chapter Four below. However, it is necessary at this stage to indicate that this term refers to the bringing together or rapprochement between the different worlds we seek to examine or appraise. Organizational culture is one well documented and researched world. Organizational learning is perhaps a less well understood world. Fusion of horizons will lead to new understanding of both concepts.

Frost et. al. define organizational culture as follows:

> *...organizational culture seems to mean talking about the importance for people of symbolism - of rituals, myths, stories and legends - and about the interpretation of events, ideas and experiences that are influenced and shaped by the groups within which they live.*
>
> (Frost, P.J. et.al. (eds) 1985:17)

Alvesson (1994) expands this by quoting Hofstede who suggests that cultural phenomena are:

...related to history and tradition, have some depth, are difficult to grasp and account for and must be interpreted; that they are collective and shared by members of groups and primarily ideational in character, having to do with values, understandings, beliefs, knowledge and other intangibles; and that they are holistic and subjective rather than strictly rational and analytical.

(Hofstede et.al (1990) in Alvesson,1993:2)

Interpretation of events, ideas and experiences; ideational, holistic and subjective notions of understanding and knowledge; the 'intangibles' of group culture - all have relevance to both the the metaphorical and metaphysical interpretation of the learning organization.

To use the learning organization as a lens or tool for examining an organization like the World Bank is a central aim of this study. It now remains to devise a means of discovering whether the characteristics of the Bank, or at least that part of its structure responsible for lending to educational development in the developing world, have resonances for or even a direct relationship with those of the learning organization.

2.8.2.Indicators of the learning organization: questions to be addressed

Studies of organizational culture have been criticized by Alvesson (1994) as simplistic, focusing on culture as a means to control and offering a banal interpretation of culture as a matter simply of rationality. Alvesson argues persuasively that organizational culture is a complex matter and that attempts to link culture with performance are doomed to failure:

Values and norms...have very little direct impact on organizational effectiveness. (Alvesson, 1994:33)

Using culture as a means to explore the concept of leadership in organizations

is equally unsatisfactory. The apparently obvious causal link between strong culture and high performance (or the reverse) has proved difficult to research (Calori and Sarnin, 1991). Alvesson argues that it might prove more fruitful to pursue what Habermas (1972) has called 'practical-hermeneutic interests', the attempt to achieve understanding about human existence:

> *..the creation of meaning and communication in order to produce knowledge about man as a cultural being, without any particular concern for the utility of that knowledge.*
>
> (Alvesson, 1994:43)

In this paradigm, questions of interpretation and description take precedence over questions of function and causal explanations.

Deep exploration into the nature of organizational culture is not a prime concern of this study. Yet a summary of the major concepts discussed so far parallel Dixon's (1994) characterization of a learning organization. Identity, group integration, shaping by the group, interpretation, collective values, beliefs and knowledge, the place of understanding - all are found in Dixon's organizational learning cycle (see Figure 1, page 21).

This study now begins to focus more sharply on the World Bank and its performance as a learning organization. This focus is not designed to elicit a link between culture, the learning organization and performance. Rather, in a Habermasian hermeneutic spirit, it will attempt understanding of human activity in the Bank by addressing the following questions:

- What is understood by Bank staff as the culture of the World Bank ?
- How is knowledge generated, shared, distributed and interpreted within the Bank ?

These broad questions are refined and expanded in Chapter Four, the

methodology discussion, below. The exploration of these questions with the subjects selected for interview - Bank insiders and outsiders - is designed to lead to better understanding.

The initial research question which prompted this whole study was whether the World Bank learn from its experience, as so much of its literature claims ? Is there an experiential learning cycle in Dixon's terms to be found within the Bank? The set of questions deriving from the main lines of enquiry listed above will lead to better understanding of the Bank's claim. Chapter Three which follows gives an outline of the functioning of the Bank and the ways in which it affects educational development in the Third World. In particular, its approaches to knowledge and information, which in turn affect choices in policy and practice, are analysed.

CHAPTER 3: HOW THE WORLD BANK FUNCTIONS

A bank is a financial institution
from which you can borrow money
as long as you can provide sufficient
evidence to show you do not need it.

Anonymous

3.1. Introduction

It might have been with the irony of the quotation above in mind that, in 1944, the Bretton Woods Conference was held in the United States. This gathering of leading western economists set out to build a new world order on the war-torn remains of the old. In his address to the conference, President Roosevelt spoke of the need for governments to prevent a recurrence of the economic collapse of the 1920s and 1930s when mass unemployment, financial instability and social upheaval laid down the preconditions for war. The experts who met at Bretton Woods embraced a common vision and ambition to address the great social and economic challenges of the post-war era (Oxfam, 1994).

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the original institution of what is now the World Bank group, was founded at Bretton Woods as a specialised agency of the United Nations. It was set up in conjunction with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the organization which was to generate much controversy at the conference and the subsequent follow-up meeting in Savannah. Whilst the IMF was set up to provide short-term balance of payments relief, the IBRD was seen as the vehicle for much longer term investment and development initiatives. The organizations were closely linked in that membership of the IBRD and access to its funds was made conditional on membership of the IMF. As Payer (1982) expresses it, this strategy was designed

to force countries to accept IMF standards and procedures in order to obtain benefits from the Bank. This issue will be returned to frequently; a recurring theme through this study's analysis of the Bank is the apparent subservience of educational development and other social sector activities to economic and financial objectives. In the words of Robert W. Oliver:

> *Their major objective was to provide a world within which competitive market forces would operate freely, unhampered by government interference, for they supposed that market forces would produce optimum results for the entire world.... As Jacob Viner put it, they were "trying to reverse the whole trend of policy and practice of the world at large in the field of international economic relations since 1914 and especially in the ill-fated years since 1929".*
>
> (quoted in Payer, 1982:22)

The architect of the IBRD and IMF was Harry Dexter White of the U.S. Treasury. His proposals formed the agenda at Bretton Woods (Mason and Arthur, 1973). He worked under the direction of Henry Morgenthau with some input from Lord Keynes. The latter actually chaired the group which designed the Bank (Jones, 1992:3). At the time of the founding of the World Bank, the United States as the dominant economic force in the free world, held 37% of its voting power. The location of the Bank's headquarters in Washington reflected the institution's status as very much the creature of the U.S. administration, a state of affairs which has not radically altered over the years.

The early years of the Bank at work were characterised by programme loans (the first four were to France, Denmark, the Netherlands and Luxembourg) which were essentially to bridge balance of payments problems. The first project loans were made to Chile in 1948 and to Brazil and Mexico in 1949. Project

lending soon became the Bank's preferred mode of international assistance. By the end of 1949 the Bank's reconstruction phase was more or less completed and it had moved into its development phase (Payer, 1982). At about this time, the Bank made clear moves to distance itself from the United Nations. This was a clear signal that political judgements or influences on the Bank's operations would be minimised and that the 'sound economic principles' of the Bank's operations would not be compromised (Jones, 1992:4). It could also be argued that the United States, as the dominant partner in the Bank mistrusted the United Nations as an organization. After all, within the U.N. each member nation had equal voting rights. Within the Bank, voting rights were in proportion to a member state's holdings.

By mid-1981 membership of the Bank had grown from 45 to 139. The process of decolonization, to which the Bank had contributed, increased the number of member states accordingly. It has been said that a great deal of the Bank's work - the financing of irrigation projects, roads, railways, port facilities and other infrastructural developments - was the work of empire anyway. This criticism will be returned to.

The impact of different presidents of the Bank on its workings cannot go unremarked. As Jones (1992) was to discover in his analysis of the Bank's role in educational development, the influence of specific individuals had a marked impact on the style and approach of the institution in general. Eugene Black, who presided over the Bank from 1949 to 1963, encouraged the kind of infrastructural lending which for many still characterizes the Bank. Black's conservatism emphasised the necessity for getting GNP growing in recipient countries. However, during his time the International Finance Corporation (IFC) was created to ease access to borrowing from the Bank by private corporations.

In addition, the International Development Association (IDA) was set up to satisfy the developing countries' demand for a more liberal type of development fund than that offered by the IBRD. In addition, the Bank saw that the IDA might prove a useful lever if so-called Third World countries could be persuaded to adopt more free market approaches to their own economies. It must be noted here that these developments within the Bank group were occurring at a time of heated competition between the capitalism of the west and the communism of the Soviet Union and its various satellites. The Bank, with its solid Wall Street power base and staffing policy, was an important player in the Cold War.

George Woods succeeded Black as president and managed the group until 1968. He was shocked by the rigidity of the institution he came into and determined to set in train developments which were to change the nature and the face of the organization both within and beyond his own period of office. It was during Woods' time that the first educational loans were made. However, it was during Robert McNamara's time that the Bank began to assume its dominant position as the foremost international development agency. McNamara came to the Bank with the avowed aim of experimenting with more innovative approaches to the Bank's activities. A fascinating conflict of interests and styles developed. McNamara, fresh from the U.S. Department of Defense, brought a kind of whiz-kid style with him. Forward planning in five-year cycles and personnel budgetting were two of the initiatives he introduced. At the same time he espoused a policy of aid to the poorest. But as Van de Laar states:

> *If..staff output is measured by the speed with which a "product" is delivered, staff are strongly tempted to avoid anything that detracts from well trodden paths; any deviant or more ambitious course of action introduces additional uncertainty and possible delays in completion dates,*

which look bad on staff records.... The prevailing work environment entails that any novel approaches come about not because of the organizational style adopted but ***in spite of it.***

(Van de Laar,1980:232)

The result of this paradoxical management climate was rapid expansion of annual lending, leading to accusations that the Bank pushed money out regardless of a borrower's actual needs. At the same time McNamara's expressed objective was aid to the poorest economies. The Bank is still subject to these kinds of criticisms as will be seen below. In fact, McNamara had set in train a process through which the Bank borrowed more money than ever before, increased the availability of loan funds and thus generated a demand within the institution for more projects. The very structure of the Bank dictated this development. As a variety of writers have stressed, the World Bank has to be viewed as a bank and it should come as no surprise that it does on a world scale what all banks at local, national and international levels attempt to do. As this study will make clear, this issue lies at the heart of the problematic nature of the Bank's educational activities. Although the structural demands to which it responds are those of a bank, the field of operations in which it engages goes far beyond what is normally expected of a bank. In short, it operates in social and developmental areas for which it may be ill-prepared and ill-designed. What Payer indicates is that the changes in the Bank's lending style during the Woods/McNamara era did not represent fundamental alterations but were adaptations to a rapidly changing environment coupled with a systemic imperative to expand loans in order to 'keep net capital transfers to borrowers positive' (Payer, 1982:27).

It is worth emphasising at this point that the IBRD and the IDA will form the focus of this study's analysis. Both institutions have the same staff and

follow the same policy guidelines and have similar, if not identical procedures for appraising and supervising project work. The IDA as a separate entity is a legal fiction within the Bank's operations. The original entity, the IBRD, makes loans in a fairly conventional way. It is "owned" by its shareholders, the member countries, who have voting rights proportional to their shareholdings. One tenth of the Bank's share capital is used in the Bank's operations. The remaining 90% can only be used as a guarantee to the Bank's creditors (Payer, 1982). The bulk of the IBRD's loanable funds are borrowed on capital markets and from governments and central banks. The IBRD can borrow at very favourable rates as it has the huge guarantees referred to above. The World Bank is the largest non-resident borrower in virtually all countries where its issues are held (Rotberg,1981).

Borrowing is divided between official sources, from governments and central banks, and from private capital markets. The latter account for two-thirds of the Bank's borrowings. The IBRD in turn offers loans at significantly more favourable rates than most borrowers could obtain in the markets. This can be done because the member states, although shareholders, receive no interest or dividends on their contributions. Secondly, the Bank has its massive callable capital to act as a guarantee on its borrowings. Thirdly, the Bank borrows only in the strongest currencies so runs no risk of loss through fluctuating exchange rates. In effect this means that borrowers are actually paying a hidden interest charge as the strong currencies favoured by the Bank may appreciate in value over a loan period. It should also be noted that Bank loans are attractive to borrowers because they are made at fixed interest rates over relatively long repayment periods.

3.2. The International Development Association (IDA)

The changing circumstances of post-war recovery led directly to the founding of the IDA in 1960. Western European economies had recovered and were prospering in many cases. Less developed countries like India and Pakistan were struggling under huge external debts. The World Bank was in no position to lend to countries with dubious creditworthiness, like the emergent African nations. The IDA was set up to maintain the Bank's role in international development and in effect created a source of soft loans for the developing world. Despite its constitutional status as separate and distinct from the World Bank, the IDA is simply a separate account managed by the Bank's officials and staff, which funds the same type of projects as the Bank to the same criteria.

IDA funds come almost exclusively from grants made by its capital-exporting member countries, with a small proportion coming from the IBRD's profits. IDA "credits" are nominally loans which must be repaid but which carry no interest charges and which have very long (up to fifty years) repayment periods (Payer, 1982:33). As the softer IDA credits are much more attractive than "harder" loans from the IBRD, there is a good deal of politicking and competition involved in obtaining the better deal. An irony of the IBRD/IDA criteria is that countries qualifying for IDA loans have to demonstrate a low rate of per capita GNP. At the same time they have to demonstrate "creditworthiness", a characteristic which may push them into a harder IBRD loan than the soft IDA arrangement preferred. The promise of IDA loans is a useful lever to exert on countries defaulting on IBRD loan repayments.

Loans and credits managed by the World Bank are for the most part project-tied. This means that funds are paid directly to the organizations or agencies successful in winning contracts for the services desired. These

organizations and agencies are normally found in member countries. Hence the situation arises where certain countries gain more from their involvement in Bank projects than the cost of their contributions to the IBRD/IDA. This state of affairs had a deleterious effect on recipient countries who either could not compete or were trying to restrict imports in order to build up their own industrial base. The rules had to change and the Bank responded by moderating its insistence on international competitive bidding. However, there is no doubt that much Bank finance, put out as development assistance, finds its way back to the richer countries, particularly the United States.

3.3. The World Bank and International Educational Development

3.3.1. Introduction

"The World Bank lies at the centre of the major changes in global education of our time", says Jones (1992:xiv). Yet questions on its operations and ideology are raised both within the Bank and beyond it. Is project lending merely the most rational channel for distribution of funds? Is it a vehicle for piloting and spreading innovation? Is it an instrument of control, ensuring that school systems reproduce capitalist economies? There is much scepticism within the Bank regarding its operations and it must again be emphasised that the Bank is not monolithic; yet it has an organizational culture. This culture has received little academic scrutiny. The Bank is secretive and, as Jones (1992) argues, the academic community itself is often closely allied to the Bank.

That the Bank must be viewed and evaluated as a Bank is almost a truism. Yet there is an inherent contradiction in this which deserves exploration. The Bank began its lending to education in the early 1960s after a long period of resistance to this type of activity. When lending to education did ensue, it was inevitably influenced by the procedures, practices and culture of the Bank

already established. The Bank's style was 'written in a language which implied that it was a formulation of received doctrine... a statement of how things were being done' (Jones, 1992:8). Even more important in the development of the Bank's attitudes and practices concerning education was the motivating force behind the change in direction. Prior to the 1960s there had been resistance to lending for education. But as Mason and Asher point out:

> *It was the availability of financing for such (developmental) undertakings that stimulated philosophizing about the vital role of economic infrastructure in the developmental process, rather than the reverse.*
>
> (Mason and Asher, 1973:152)

Once the economic infrastructure had been disaggregated to reveal the severe shortages of trained manpower in the developing countries the momentum for investment in education began to grow. At about the same time new ideas in human capital and human resource development were becoming more widely accepted in the academic community. The Bank began to look for expert guidance beyond its own community and eventually, senior Bank staff recommended Bank investment in education and training (Jones, 1992:38). What materialized was a 'limited policy' approach. The Bank was convinced that infrastructure, particularly buildings, should form the main focus for its interventions, regardless of what Jones calls borrower sentiment, new thinking in the economics of education or mainstream educational thought (Jones, 1992:40). The Bank engaged in an ad hoc approach which led inevitably to conflicts. For recipient countries, unprecedented levels of funding were made available for very limited educational purposes - marble-clad walls for institutions whose graduates could not find employment. The Bank in its early days was learning by doing. One of

its pioneer educators, Duncan Ballantine, is on record as stating, "There were no road maps, so we had to learn on the job" (Ballantine,1986).

3.3.2. Early Project Lending

Philip Jones (1992), whose work has already been quoted extensively, provides an excellent and detailed overview of the Bank's 'learning by doing' on projects in the earliest days. Broad conclusions which he draws include:

- the short-lived co-operation with Unesco in project planning and management, due to ideological as well as organizational conflicts between the two bodies
- the development of a highly assertive Bank style in negotiating projects with recipient governments (see Jones,1992:75-77)
- the development of highly optimistic and unrealistic project designs in the early days
- inflated expectations resulting from the sheer scale of projects
- high costs, delays and budget over-runs seemed to characterize Bank initiatives
- forced and unrealistic attempts to link project outcomes with labour market demands
- internal technical battles in the Bank over appropriate theoretical tools for policy formulation
- the growth of expertise in technical areas rather than the broader macro-economic sphere previously the Bank's major concern
- conceptual difficulties in linking the Bank's educational portfolio with country economic reports
- inflexibility in planning and an inability to use projects for innovation or experimentation

- tight financial control supplanting overall project monitoring and evaluation.

Jones' catalogue of shortcomings is summarised by Mason and Asher as follows:

> *It cannot be said that the Bank has been an outstanding leader in applying new techniques of project appraisal or analysis of development processes.... A more common criticism, and one more difficult to dispose of, is that the Bank's practice of supervising construction, as well as the operation of projects in their early years, tends to deprive borrowers of learning opportunities....Is it better to emphasize the learning process at the expense of possible mistakes or to make sure that the operation is well done, even though done by outsiders ? There is no single answer to this question, but it is probably true that the Bank, perhaps with excessive zeal for the correct technical solution, has not in its project lending contributed as much to the education of borrowers as it should have done...Perhaps the most serious criticism of IBRD project lending is its failure to assess adequately the developmental consequences of its loans. Ends-use supervision falls far short of dealing with this question.*
>
> (Mason and Asher, 1973:258)

3.3.3. McNamara and beyond

These early criticisms were to be overtaken by substantial changes in the Bank occasioned by the arrival of Robert McNamara as President in 1968. His 12 years in office have been the subject of much analysis and are generally seen to mark a watershed in the Bank's operations. McNamara emphasised a new focus for Bank lending - the alleviation of poverty, to be achieved through 'redistribution with growth'. The publication of the *Education Sector Working Paper* of 1974 made explicit this new emphasis in an influential style. McNamara's presidency saw

unprecedented levels of lending; by 1981, 85% of all Bank lending had taken place under McNamara's leadership (Jones, 1992:90). At this time the Bank also experienced major changes in its organizational structure, its lending policy and its conceptual approaches to the economics of education. Perhaps of greatest significance at this period was the Bank's formulation of a view of development which not only informed the Bank's lending activities but exerted great influence over the policies of recipient countries. This issue of the hegemony of the Bank's views and indeed their validity, is picked up below in the review of critiques of the Bank but at this point in the discussion raises interesting questions about the Bank as a learning organization. In an increasingly complex economic world which was to be further complicated by the oil price crisis of the early 1970s, the Bank formulated a view of development and the role education should play in the process which persists to this day. Briefly stated, despite the poverty alleviation emphasis of MacNamara's rhetoric, the Bank continued in one guise or another to embrace a policy which viewed education as a means to increasing worker productivity. The opening line of Lockheed and Verspoor (1991), a classic Bank text, reads:

> *A nation's children are its greatest resource.*
>
> (Lockheed and Verspoor, 1991:xiii)

This influential text develops into a technicist, instrumental hymn to the economic value of schooling. Despite a dedication which states that the book is 'about children, learning and primary schools', it is in fact solely about the uses to which primary schooling can be put to ensure 'national development'. This aspect of Bank thinking about schooling dates back to the 1974 *Education Sector Working Paper* referred to earlier. But equally as important as the Bank's narrow view of what schooling is about - and space precludes a more detailed discussion

of the organization's conflation of schooling with education - are the twin issues of how the Bank gets its knowledge and information and how it shares that information. Jones (1992:94) draws attention to the fact that the influential group of strategists and thinkers during MacNamara's time at the Bank came from the same academic background and shared common views on how economic development worked. As a result Bank policies on a more diversified and liberalised approach to educational lending were formulated, albeit by an 'in-house' team. Of great importance was the Bank's decision to view lending in the light of a country's systemic educational needs. However, it must be emphasised that the education system was still viewed as a vehicle for producing manpower and thereby raising productivity.

If the MacNamara years can be seen as the beginning of a more systematic lending policy based on public criteria, they can also be seen as a period when recipient countries began to question the blanket application of such criteria to all cases. Within the Bank there was a profound debate going on between the manpower forecasters and those who favoured the newly developed technique of cost-benefit analysis (Jones, 1992:104). This debate cannot be gone into in detail here but suffice it to say that it illustrates the Bank's total focus on the economic role of schooling. It should also be noted in advance of the critiques of the Bank discussed below that cost-benefit analysis (CBA) remains a major article of faith in the Bank, despite the scholarly and cogent criticisms of the technique by such writers as Hough (1994).

McNamara's presidency is rightly emphasised but he was by no means the the only powerful figure to head the Bank and influence its ideology extensively. His successors, notably Clausen and Conable, embraced the controversial 'structural adjustment' policy which has characterized the Bank's lending over

the past ten years. The education division of the Bank had undergone structural adjustment itself with the accession of Conable to the Bank presidency. A reorganization occurred in 1987 which led to the break up of the Education and Training Department (Jones, 1992:161) and saw education downgraded, with researchers and staffers scattered throughout the Bank. Population and Human Resources division took on responsibility for much educational policy work. Yet at this time the Bank president initiated the 'education for all' stance which was to inform Bank policy initiatives for some time to come. Jones lays great emphasis on the significant personal contributions of two Bank education specialists, Habte and Haddad, in this 'shift in priority (which) shaped more than any other factor, the educational policy orientation of the Bank in the 1980s and early 1990s' (Jones, 1992:161).

3.3.4. The Bank's educational policies

Documentary evidence of Bank policies is dealt with in Chapter 5 (see Table 2 on page 50). However, it is appropriate at this stage of the discussion to give some idea of what policies the Bank has espoused and some of the criticisms of Bank policy statements. In the long-awaited *Priorities and Strategies for Education* (World Bank, 1995) a familiar statement is presented in the introductory section:

> *Education produces knowledge, skills, values and attitudes; it is essential for civic order and citizenship and for sustained economic growth and the reduction of poverty. Education is also about culture; it is the main instrument for disseminating the accomplishments of human civilization.* (World Bank, 1995:xi)

The document goes on to indicate that the Bank believes that education is important, both as a right and as a means for improving the conditions of life. To do this effectively, the quality of teaching and learning must be improved,

TABLE 2

A Summary of Bank Themes in Education: 1974-1995

Note: The selected documents are ~

Education Sector Working Paper (1974), abbreviated to ESWP
Education Sector Policy Paper (1980), abbreviated to ESPP
Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (1980), abbreviated to ESSA
Priorities and Strategies for Education (1995), abbreviated to PSE

ESWP	ESPP	ESSA	PSE
Largely internal sources	Research influenced	Few references, mainly from agencies	Stronger research input
Formal schooling focus	Formal schooling focus	Formal/basic education	Formal schooling focus
External efficiency emphasised	Internal efficiency emphasised		Internal/external efficiency
Hardware	Software	Software	Software/HRD
Vocational education	General education	Secondary/vocational education	Basic education
Equity	Efficiency	Equity/gender	Quality/gender
Public finance	Private finance	Diversity sources	Public/private funding
Manpower needs	Cost-benefit analysis	Human capital development	Cost-benefit analysis
Relevance	Labour market earnings	Improve academic standards	Stakeholder relevance
External policies	Local research based	External policies	Research plus experience
Modern sector education	Modern sector education	Modern sector education	Modern sector education
	Inflation of qualifications	Improve management	Cost-sharing
	Irrelevance of education	Improve information	Gender gap
		Distance education	Access

provision should be expanded, access to education should be more equitable and there is an urgent need to find new resources for education. Better use should be made of existing resources and a strong priority is expressed for basic primary and junior secondary education. The core subjects must be emphasised, private provision should be encouraged, clearer specification of objectives, better supervision and accountability and greater competition among schools should be nurtured. Free basic education should be balanced by cost-recovery in other sectors, particularly higher education. This 1995 statement builds on a long tradition of similar policy statements and can be illustrated from further publications.

In 1991, Marlaine Lockheed and Adriaan Verspoor, supported by a considerable team of World Bank staff writers, produced the Bank's *Improving Primary Education in Developing Countries* (Lockheed and Verspoor, 1991). The foreword to the book sets the tone for an almost wholly instrumental view of education and its role in developing countries. The authors' preface does begin with the words, 'This book is about children, learning and primary schools' (Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991:xv). Unfortunately, the book is solely about the uses to which primary education can be put to bring about 'national development'. Lip service is paid to primary education serving other purposes, such as helping children 'function effectively in society'. But again the language is revealing. Children do not live happily, enjoy their childhood, have fun - they 'function effectively'. The neglect of arguments for the intrinsic, cultural and social value of schooling characterises much Bank discourse despite the 'Education is also about culture' statement quoted above.

Similar criticisms could be made of *Higher Education: The Lessons of Experience* (World Bank,1994). This publication, again produced by a Bank team

of experts, starts with a conventional statement that universities are essential in all countries for the education of future leaders and the provision of high level manpower. Governments invest heavily; the Bank has assisted in the development of higher education throughout the world. In the past twenty years, enrolments in lower/middle income countries have increased by an average of 6.2% per annum. However, quality is perceived to be deteriorating.

Public subsidies are too high and more equitable income distribution suffers as graduates earn more and more. The need for reform is 'widely acknowledged' - a generalisation akin to the 'research shows...' arguments beloved of the Bank. Proposed solutions to the 'crisis' include more privatisation, diversified sources of funding, redefinition of the state's role in higher education and more emphasis on quality and equity - all echoes of Coombs' analysis of a decade ago (Coombs, 1985). The document is fraught with contradictions. Cost-recovery is proposed whilst student loan schemes are characterised as largely unworkable. Higher education's contribution to economic growth and poverty alleviation is alluded to while the soaking up of valuable resources and the growing scale of graduate unemployment are also noted. Equity is promoted as a goal for higher education through positive discrimination whilst privatisation is also recommended, presumably to provide places for those who can afford to pay. Income generating activities for universities like research and consultancy services are recommended. At the same time, note is taken of the poor quality of staff in many universities in developing countries.

Underpinning the whole analysis is the unexamined assumption that higher education's contribution to economic growth and development is unproblematic. Worse, for a statement of World Bank policy towards higher education, no radical or robust alternatives to the standard model are offered, except for a brief

discussion of diversifying tertiary level institutions. Little or no research on innovatory practices is offered. Exemplars of good practice are drawn almost exclusively from countries where the Bank is most active.

The long awaited Review Paper *Priorities and Strategies for Education* (World Bank, 1995) is full of examples of the Bank's unwillingness to learn from the experience of its own past or that of others. The fundamental premise of the document is that basic formal education remains the key to economic advancement for poor countries. Lip service is paid in various places to the socializing or cultural aspects of education - usually in terms of how these elements affect the earning power and productive capacity of the educated. Throughout the document, the language is that of the technicist. Effective education is dependent on five "inputs", which include "tools for teaching and learning" (World Bank, 1995:6). Attention to the outcomes of schooling is restricted to economic analysis and standard measures of achievement. The key priority for education is that:

> *...it must meet economies' growing demands for adaptable workers who can readily acquire new skills and it must support the continued expansion of knowledge.*
>
> (World Bank, 1995:1)

This is put forward as a prescription for countries where there are no jobs and where the days of mass semi-skilled employment have gone for ever, if they even existed. Most disturbingly of all the Bank persists in transferring economic evidence from the United States to the developing countries of Africa. Evidence of rises in wage premiums in the USA associated with mastery of elementary mathematics is advanced as a justification for investment in basic education in countries which have little or no industrial employment capacity (World Bank, 1995:97). Like most industrialised countries the United States has huge

opportunities for part-time, casual, informal employment from job-sharing to dish-washing and clerical work. Countries like Bangladesh and Tanzania do not have these opportunities and designing universal primary education on the premise that they do is at best misleading. The dismissal of vocational education in the 1995 Paper is illustrative of the unrealistic ideology by which the Bank works. The paper claims that 'work tasks involve less and less manual attention' (World Bank, 1995:ix). This may be true in the industrialized, automated and computerized economies of the West but is hardly a viable premise for policy in countries where the vast majority of the labour force is involved in agriculture and the informal sector.

The Bank's insistence on its sectoral approach (World Bank, 1995:13) is also a cause for concern. As its prescriptions show the emphasis is on making the education sector more efficient and effective. But unless change in education is accompanied by other changes in the economy which lead to job creation, basing educational policy on fitting primary school leavers for employment is doomed to failure. The Bank's Structural Readjustment programmes have rarely led to greater employment opportunities; rather the reverse.

It has been said earlier that the Bank is a bank and that it takes an economist's view of the role and purpose of education. This is a legitimate enough stance although it has the obvious weaknesses of any one-dimensional view of social phenomena. Unfortunately, questions must also be raised about the legitimacy of the Bank's economics, particularly its enthusiastic embracing of cost-benefit analysis as a reliable tool (World Bank, 1995:21). The section of the Bank's Review Paper devoted to a discussion of education and development (World Bank, 1995:17-31) is at best controversial. An arguably faulty view of the relationship between schooling and economic development leaves one with deep

concerns regarding the Bank's self-proclaimed advisory role :

> *Bank financing will generally be designed to leverage (sic) spending and policy change by national authorities.*
>
> (World Bank, 1995:14)

The regular output of World Bank policy documents is firmly based on an unproblematic and positivist view of the world, i.e. what is broken can be fixed, but appears to be equally firmly based on a broad network of research findings. Fagerlind and Saha have this to say about the positivistic style of much discourse on education and development:

> *What we felt was lacking in the field... was a broader and more coherent view of how the economic, social and political aspects of societies as a whole affected and were affected by education.*
>
> (Fagerlind and Saha, 1983:vi).

The authors go on to state:

> *Our conviction that efforts to use education to promote change in particular directions could be both highly successful or doomed to failure motivated us to think more carefully about the complexity of the relationship and how it works.*
>
> (Fagerlind and Saha, 1983:vi).

This understanding of the complexities of policy formulation appears to be lacking in the Bank's approach to finding answers and solving problems. As noted earlier, the relatively unproblematic critical path analysis which the Bank adopts tends to oversimplify what Fagerlind and Saha use as the rationale for their argument - the complexity of the relationship between education and national development. The formula the Bank appears to adopt is that clearly defined problem areas can be identified, equally clear research findings can tell us how

to resolve the problems and by dint of rational strategies the mismatch between education and national development can be bridged.

3.4. Critiques of the Bank

Critiques of the Bank abound and 'Bank-bashing' has long been a popular sport among academics. Peter Williams' metaphor of the Bank viewing the world from Mount Olympus dates from the 1970s and provided a powerful critique at the time (Williams, 1974). Williams' criticism of the Bank as an institution cut off from the real world is echoed in other more recent critiques. Ironically enough, one of the Bank's own authors, Jamil Salmi, comments on preparation for the 1994 World Bank paper, *Higher Education, The Lessons of Experience* as follows:

> *the study would not be a traditional World Bank document prepared in isolation in Washington...*
>
> *(Salmi in King, K. (ed), 1994)*

However, of more relevance to the present study are critical analyses which deal with the Bank's ideology and rhetoric, its practices, its management and whether it learns from the past. These analyses focus on five broad areas of the Bank's functioning in the developing world:

- the Bank's economic ideology: its Marketism
- the Bank's uses of research, knowledge and information: its Technicism
- the Bank's hegemony in aid policy: its Imperialism
- the Bank's lack of self-criticism and reflection: its Egoism
- the Bank's distance from the real world: its Olympianism.

3.4.1. The Bank's ideology and rhetoric

There is no doubt that the Bank has an instrumental, market-economics view of the role of education in the world. It is also a powerful political force despite the

assertion in its charter that is a purely economic institution. As George and Sabelli put it:

> *As a supranational agency in an increasingly globalized world...*
>
> *the Bank now has more to say about state policies than many states.*
>
> (George and Sabelli, 1994:1)

In promoting market economics, the Bank has a poor record of success. Its insistence on structural readjustment programmes as the basis for renewal of loans or granting of new moneys has not led to the economic growth the Bank predicted. Oxfam (1994) refers to this approach as 'extreme' and states:

> *Potentially competitive labour intensive industries and rural employment have been undermined by declining public investment in social and economic infrastructures, credit shortages and import constraints. Moreover, the imposition of an 'export-led growth' strategy for resolving the debt crisis has carried the seeds of its own destruction, especially in the world's poorest countries...In Oxfam's view, these adjustment policies were in large measure responsible for the 'lost decade' of the 1980s, when most developing countries experienced steep declines in human welfare.*
>
> (Oxfam, 1994:4)

Not only do the critics regard the Bank's central mission as unfocussed and wrongly conceived but would draw attention to the harmful effects of such policies in terms of the social, political and environmental degradation ensuing from them. Friends of the Earth go so far as to state:

> *For ten years (working with citizens' groups from around the world) we have been accumulating more and more evidence of environments destroyed and economies undermined by World Bank loans.*
>
> (in George and Sabelli, 1994:233)

These criticisms arise from the perception that the Bank is working within a discredited development paradigm. It is also clear to many observers that the Bank has not succeeded in calling economic trends accurately. Within the Bank, those like Herman Daly who have attempted to draw attention to the shortcomings of Bank economic policy, have been unable to move the organization away from its basic articles of faith. As George and Sabelli put it:

> *The market may be reasonably efficient at setting prices but it can tell us almost nothing about costs, particularly the longer-term ones.*
>
> (George and Sabelli, 1994:203)

Jones (1992) devotes considerable space to discussion of the Bank's focus on the pace of disbursement as a priority, rather than the effects of its lending policies. This leads the researcher to the conclusion that the organization lacks intellectual leadership. It must also be stated that the constraints and demands of its management structure perpetuate these damaging conditions. George and Sabelli (1994:212 ff) indicate that senior staff have huge workloads, frequently scrambling to get loan agreements processed by short deadlines. There is rapid turnover at this level, the Board members are protected from bad news and standard operating procedures function everywhere within the Bank, thereby reducing flexibility and capacity to respond creatively to new situations. The publication of the internal Wapenhans Report in 1992 staggered Bank officials by its discovery that 37.5% of projects could be classified as 'troubled', Bank-speak for failing. The relationship between staff time spent on project preparation and eventual project success was in inverse proportion. Borrowers showed little commitment to projects dreamed up by Bank staffers. In Wapenhans' own words, 'the evidence of non-compliance (by recipient countries) is overwhelming'. Borrowers respected their agreements in only 22% of the loans examined by

Wapenhans (George and Sabelli, 1994:224) - a far cry from the 90% success rate claimed by the Bank's own Operations Evaluation Department.

The Bank's economic ideology and rhetoric are open to criticism not only on technical grounds. The Bank has become the most influential force in determining educational policies and priorities in the developing world and as Lauglo (1996) puts it 'Bankers and pedagogues think differently'. Contending cultures are at work. The Bank believes in 'hard' information, although the rigidity of cost-benefit analysis has already been questioned. Social scientists are comfortable with 'softer', more qualitative information. The Bank embraces a rationalist model of economic man. Educationalists are often more interested in the influences which shape choice rather than in the simple matter of what choices are made. Human capital theory shapes Bank policies. More organic models of human development concern educationalists. Improving the productivity of labour has received little attention in educational theory. Higher order goals, often expressed in admittedly woolly terms like 'developing each child to his or her fullest potential', characterize the thinking of educationalists. In contrast, key concerns of the economists who determine Bank attitudes include costs, inputs, outputs and economic benefits. The processes of teaching and learning which transform inputs to outputs lie outside their expertise. Thus the Bank frequently latches on to school effectiveness studies, or emphasises libraries or home-work as single-factor solutions to complex educational problems. Economists like to use mathematical models - the education production function (EPF) is a typical example (Simmons, 1980). Educators know that the classroom reality is a turbulent environment of organized anarchy where little is predictable or amenable to mathematical formulae. Lauglo (1996) states:

These pedagogic concerns might seem like 'armchair' ideals which have

little to offer in the grim reality of schools in low income countries. But the model which underlies an economistic view of education might suffer from a more Olympian kind of remoteness because it has not evolved through study and practice of the education process itself..... Thus the stage is set for much tension between 'soft' pedagogues and the increasingly 'hard-nosed' World Bankers of education. The(1995) Paper is likely to exacerbate such tension, because it is an assertion of a tougher 'Bankers' ethos' than previous policy papers on education.

(Lauglo, 1996:5)

3.4.2. The Bank's approach to knowledge and information

If the Bank's ideology and rhetoric can be faulted and found inconsistent, even more revealing is its approach to knowledge and information. Characteristics of the true learning organization discussed in Chapter 2 above (see especially Table 2 on page 20) included the following:

- information is generated and manipulated through transformation of experience
- responsible action is based on interpreted meaning
- knowledge is contributed by all members in a planned and intentional way
- systematic processes create meaning
- widespread generation of information is essential
- integration of information into the organization is deliberate
- collective interpretation of information is encouraged
- negative events are seen as sources of knowledge
- differing viewpoints are embraced for problem-solving
- findings are related to guiding norms

- continuous feedback and experimentation are built into the organization's activities
- organizational learning is affected by informational overload/underload
- algorithms replace heuristics
- information absorption must be as effective as possible

As noted in Chapter 2, the role of knowledge and information is seen as of paramount importance in the learning organization. Chapter 5 of this study offers an empirical investigation of the extent to which the Bank qualifies as a learning organization in terms, inter alia, of its approach to knowledge and information. But the starting point of the whole enquiry was an implicit 'foreshadowed problem' that the Bank was not obviously a learning organization. Well known and scholarly critiques of the Bank, whilst not necessarily using the learning organization terminology as a tool of analysis, draw attention to weaknesses in the Bank's approach to epistemology. Van de Laar, already quoted in 3.1. above suggests that any innovation within the Bank comes about not so much because of the organizational style of the institution but in spite of it. The organizational culture is one which rewards use of 'well trodden paths'. George and Sabelli, referring to the hegemonic status of the Bank in the development industry state:

> ... *culturally speaking it has a near-monopoly over development discourse, theory and practice and successfully propagates an increasingly fundamentalist ideology.*
>
> (George and Sabelli, 1994:220)

Thus it can be argued that what knowledge the Bank does have is not necessarily valid or current.

The research dimension is an important factor in the Bank's approach to knowledge and information. The quoting of research findings lends an air of

legitimacy to otherwise shaky or unclear arguments. Weiss (1979) in an article entitled *The Many Meanings of Research Utilization* presents seven models of how research can influence policy making, ranging from the linear model of fundamental applied research through to the enlightenment and 'intellectual enterprise' models. The Bank appears to use research from a number of the categories identified by Weiss. Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) provide examples of utilizing research for advocacy, for problem-solving and as a linear model. The writers present many policy statements as unproblematic yet often quote only one research study in support of their position (see Lockheed and Verspoor,1991:67 for example). Bennell, in a detailed technical analysis of the Bank's use of rates-of-return analysis, draws attention to a further abuse of research. Eight 'miracle economies' of South Asia are used to illustrate the linkage between a policy of basic education first and rates-of-return by level of education. In only two of the eight countries quoted is such a direct correspondence actually observable (Bennell, 1994:12).

Samoff (1993) also has some strong words to say about the Bank's use, or abuse, of research. Not only does he criticise the Bank's generalisations concerning what the research actually says but he takes issue with the notion that research actually does influence policy making in the way the Bank assumes it does or should. Writing of *Education for All* , Samoff states:

> *The Jomtien resolutions are but a single example of the privileged position of research or, more accurately, of claims about research and its findings in the discourse on educational policy.*
>
> (Samoff, 1993:185)

Samoff also identifies a convergence in aid agency approaches which prevents nation states from shopping around for support for policies not reflected in Bank

priorities. Britain's ODA makes no bones about linking its aid policies to those of the Bank and the agency has shown considerable willingness to support larger Bank initiatives by taking on components of Bank projects rather than identifying and pursuing its own interventions. In Samoff's words, 'The World Bank has come to be the lead agency in setting the education and development agenda'(Samoff, 1993:187). Samoff's analysis of the rise of the Bank as the lead player shows clearly the inherent contradiction in using a Bank as the main development agency. As a Bank it requires quick and obvious returns. Its staff are dependent on short-term successful outcomes to their activities if preferment and advancement are to follow. The dominant perspective is economic - what works must be expressed in explicit and quantitative terms. As Samoff expresses it:

> *The greater the role in the (project) approval process played by individuals who consider themselves 'hard' scientists (a self-description that is common among, but not limited to, economists) the greater the pressure for explicit and unambiguous research findings expressed in quantitative terms.*
>
> (Samoff, 1993:190)

Research is expensive and complex to undertake. Small wonder that the agency itself does it - commissioning, undertaking and managing the research enterprise. But this incestuous procedure merely serves to reinforce the weakness of Bank policy formulation. In-house experts, working within an organizational climate, which though not monolithic, has a style of its own, are almost bound to find the answers they are supposed to be looking for. The notion that there may in fact be no answers cannot be entertained. This is clearly illustrated by a leading Bank expert, George Psacharopoulos who presents

an analysis of the 'problem' of policy in African education as a story of failure because policies have not been implemented fully or properly and have not been clearly stated nor financed adequately. Therefore:

> *Perhaps the safest course of action for the policy maker would be to abstain from educational policy fireworks and concentrate on the documentation of cause and effect relationships - the only activity in my opinion, that can lead to successful school improvement.*
>
> (Psacharopoulos,1990:21)

Once again we see the Bank's search for definitive answers, through research or exemplars, presented in a technicist mode. Answers are 'out there', and it is merely a technical task to find them as efficiently as possible. Yet most researchers would agree on claims regarding the impact of schooling on economic productivity, health, population and good governance. But educationalists who are convinced that formal education generally brings about benefits may be very uneasy about the firm and categorical generalisations found in the Bank's documentary output. There are other voices which argue that formal education can have undesirable effects - it alienates young people from their own culture, it can legitimate social injustice through its selection procedures, it can be used politically to indoctrinate, it can create unrealistic aspirations and so on. None of these voices are heard in the most recent Bank Paper. The 1995 Paper does not recognise that it is at least problematic whether schools unlock the door to a better way of life for their pupils. The moral and social impact of education is not reflected in the paper, neither is research which deals with these issues. The Bank tends to use the knowledge and information which suits its case and to neglect or ignore the considerable body of research which would contest its basic assumptions. Referring to the Bank's recent Higher Education paper (World

Bank, 1994) Colclough refers to its basic premise as 'descriptively accurate but analytically deeply misleading' (Colclough in King, K. (ed), 1994:22). The case is made that many developing countries are over-extended financially in their provision of education. Yet Colclough argues that the problem is not over - spending on schooling but over-spending on other sectors to the disbenefit of education. The Bank's blanket judgement that less should be spent does not support the reality in many countries where funding should be diverted from other sectors to support education fully.

3.4.3. The Bank as imperialist

If the Bank's marketism and technicism are major foci for the organization's critics, so too is its apparent imperialism. The Bank's lending for educational projects has increased eightfold in the last 20 years. It now provides more than 25% of all bilateral and multilateral donor assistance to education in developing countries (Bennell, 1995:1). Samoff's fears of the hegemonic outcomes of this position of dominance have been touched upon earlier - recipient states have fewer alternatives to choose from as the Bank's thinking dominates the aid agenda. McGrath (1994) sees the Bank's Higher Education paper of 1995 as 'further homogenisation of donor policy' (in King, K (ed), 1994:53). Buchert (1995) in discussing what has happened post-Jomtien, draws attention to the marked similarity in donor agencies' programmes for 'Education for All', a direct consequence of the Bank's orchestration of the Jomtien meeting. Critics are justly concerned that aid policies are being adopted second-hand from what the Bank has to offer with little reflection. McGinn puts the imperialism case even more strongly. The Bank, he says, is:

> *Weakening the ability of a state to be the major influence on everything which takes place within its borders...* (McGinn, 1994:291)

The Bank provides loans only for its own specified programmes, establishes its conditionalities which must be met before funding is released, produces 'guidelines' concerning the hire of consultants and the selection of overseas training institutions and co-ordinates policy making among various countries. To label this as imperialism is no exaggeration.

3.4.4. The Bank and self-reflection

Bennell (1995) in the course of his technical criticism of the Bank's uses of rates-of-return analysis has this to say about its other practices:

> *The simple truth .... is that the Bank rarely evaluates its own education investments in the way it is prescribing for others.*
>
> (Bennell, 1995:19)

Despite hopeful noises emanating from such documents as *Higher Education: The Lessons from Experience* (World Bank, 1994) which seem to indicate a more consultative style in Bank publications, self-reflection does not appear to typify the way the Bank works. Part of the reason for this is structural. The Bank tends to deal in short-term (five-year) projects. Bank staff are mobile, moving on to the next assignment, the next job without too much evaluation of what has gone before. Peter Williams suggests in reviewing the Bank's policies that 'ideological inclination has taken precedence over objectivity' (in King, 1995:21). Olsson, writing in the same publication states:

> *It is easy to get the impression that examples and studies have been chosen to confirm a model, rather than as a basis for balanced conclusions.*
>
> (in King, 1994:55)

Yet more hopefully, Reimers, writing of the Higher Education paper says:

> *The success of the paper of drawing lessons from experience while constantly reiterating the need for context-specific policy design could*

beneficially inform debate within the Bank beyond the specific field of higher education.

(in King, 1994:60)

Implicit in this is the perception that the rest of the Bank's education specialists rarely indulge in this form of reflection. Another aspect of the Bank's egoism is touched on by Reimers:

A more serious shortcoming of the paper relates to the knowledge base chosen to draw lessons of experience. Of the 152 bibliographic references, only 32 (21%) are not World Bank publications or publications of Bank staff

(in King, 1994:62)

3.4.5. The Bank's distance from the real world

Reference has already been made to Peter Williams' 1974 metaphor of the Bank as an Olympian institution. Enough has probably already been said about its narrow economistic outlook, its embracing of a North American world-view, its highly selective uses of information and expertise and its conviction that it knows the right ways to do things. The picture drawn so far has been one of a hugely influential and even dominant force in world educational development which promotes policy decisions and choices with great authority and power. Yet as an organization it is sadly flawed as the criticisms above have shown. Certainly the contrast between the Bank and the archetypal learning organization as envisaged by the authorities discussed in Chapter 2 above could not be sharper. As this study moves into its empirical phase and the investigation of the Bank as a learning organization unfolds it is expected that fusion of horizons will occur and that this apparently sharp distinction will be examined more closely.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

> **The human understanding when it has once adopted an opinion draws all things else to support and agree with it. And though there be a greater number and weight of instances to be found on the other side, yet these it either neglects and despises, or by some distinction sets aside and rejects, in order that by this great and pernicious predetermination the authority of its former conclusion may remain inviolate**
>
> Francis Bacon

4.1. Introduction

Despite the stern warning of Bacon quoted above, research is often presented in an unproblematic way as if the whole process is rational, logical and follows a predictable and warrantable path, much like the stereotype of experimentation in the natural science laboratory. Recent writing on real life experiences of research sheds a different light on the process which can be messy, unpredictable and leading to different outcomes from those planned (Cornett, 1995; Hyde, 1994; Vulliamy et al, 1990). If the process of research is often more problematic than predicted then it must also be admitted that writing up is more than a winding-up activity at the end of the real business. Writing becomes a form of reconstruction as new aspects of the topic are discovered in the process, or in Bacon's terms irrational persistence of beliefs is maintained. With these caveats in mind, the research approach selected can now be described.

A qualitative approach has been adopted for this study, mainly because the concept of a learning organization is somewhat loose and diversely defined. It is worth mentioning that hard distinctions between qualitative and quantitative research can be misleading (Kirk and Miller, 1986:5). It could be argued that

qualitative and quantitative research use distinctive methods of data collection and have distinctive research strategies. But the differences are not always clear cut (see Figure 2 below). Sometimes a positivist epistemology can be detected in participant observation, a key technique for the qualitative researcher. Equally, a quantitative study may require considerable interpretation of data or events. There is no simple one-to-one relationship between a research method and an epistemological position (Dale, Arbers and Procter, 1988). Vulliamy (1990:10) argues that definitions of qualitative research are themselves controversial and in practice, different theoretical and methodological positions may be adopted within the genre.

From a technical viewpoint, the choice of a starting point on the continuum between qualitative and quantitative methods is dictated by a judgement on the suitability of the chosen paradigm for the research questions selected (Bryman, 1988; Vulliamy et al, 1990). Different types of question demand different research approaches. Within this study the researcher's preconception was whether the concept of the ***learning organization*** could be applied to a huge international aid agency like the World Bank. The learning organization is now part of the landscape of organizational theory and characteristics of such organizations have been adduced. However, no set of general criteria has been developed against which an organization's status as a learning organization or potential for becoming one might be measured. To explore and chart new territory is an aim of this study. It is widely recognised that the qualitative approach is well suited to this type of enquiry (Bryman, 1988; Vulliamy et al, 1990).

Investigating the Bank's capacity for learning is also designed to produce guidelines or pointers for its development towards the objective of becoming a learning organization. This presupposes that learning organizations are

worthwhile. Chapter Two examined that supposition and concluded that the concept, although capable of diverse interpretations, has significant value for organizations wishing to achieve greater effectiveness.

It should also be admitted that a qualitative approach to the study was intentionally adopted as a matter of personal preference. This in itself is not sufficient to justify a research approach but it is a fact of life that research issues are made rather than found. Problems have to be constructed. They do not spring ready-formed from the academic undergrowth (Dale, 1986:50; Woods and Hammersley,1977).

For the purposes of the present study, neither experimental techniques nor numerical analysis lend themselves to the type of enquiry envisaged. Finding out what people think and what they do on a large scale probably indicates a particular epistemology and subsequent methods of a numerical or quantitative nature. Similarly, filletting large numbers of documents to analyse the frequency of use of positive or negative statements on a given topic lends itself to numerical approaches. For the present study, conducted on a small scale to examine a loosely constructed concept in its theoretical and practical dimensions a ***hermeneutic approach*** has been selected as the dominant methodology. This approach provides access to what Bryman (1988) has called 'warrantable knowledge' within a qualitative epistemology.

4.2. Methodological Underpinning

4.2.1. Introduction

Writers on hermeneutics argue that all understanding is based on pre-conceptions. No matter how hard the researcher tries, theory is unavoidable in any study. However, pre-conceptions are open to challenge through what Bernstein (1983) refers to as the "hermeneutic circle".

4.2.2. Grounded theory in partnership with hermeneutics

Strauss and Corbin (1994:283) suggest that this combination of approaches may present great promise for the future. Grounded theory held certain attractions for the researcher. It is a methodology which requires the researcher to generate theory from the data gathered; a grounded theory is inductively derived from the study of the phenomena selected (Corbin and Strauss, 1990:23). However, the concept of the learning organization had been selected as the phenomenon to be examined. The concept was distilled from the literature so a deductive rather than an inductive methodology presented itself. It could be argued from the evidence in Chapter Two above that the concept of the learning organization is so diffuse that it may deserve a grounded theory approach to provide the concept with a respectable theory. However, the researcher found himself in danger of creating a trait theory of the learning organization against which the World Bank might be measured. This would not necessarily have been a bad model and to some extent it does inform this study. But, it is argued, the process of research must be satisfying to the researcher. The Bank literature and its critics represented secondary sources. Analysis of these produced warrantable findings. How could the responses of the interview subjects be made more fruitful ? How could their voices be heard ? It was obvious that interviewees could not be approached cold - "What do you think of the World Bank?" - and out of the mass of data theory be generated. More focus was required, hence the phrasing of the questions in the interview schedule. The spirit of hermeneutics emphasises a process of becoming, rather than the development of a means to an end. The essence of hermeneutics is to develop a rapprochement between the present world and the different world we seek to appraise, what is known in the literature as a "fusion of horizons". Therefore to enhance understanding through a fusion of

horizons becomes the basic interest of the research, without necessarily much explicit theorisation. Hence the selection of a hermeneutic approach, particularly to the interview responses but also to the literature.

Cornett (1995) has argued the need for constant vigilance and self-reflectiveness in qualitative research, as indeed in all research. There is no doubt that the implicit values of the researcher and even his or her unconscious beliefs may become evident in an interpretative study of this type. The researcher may still work on the assumption that truth is to be found "out there" in some way - what Bernstein refers to as the "Cartesian Anxiety" (Bernstein,1983). This problem is addressed through the hermeneutic approach which has been adopted. Understanding does not come from separating ourselves from our own context. Meaning comes through events of understanding; it is not there to be discovered. All knowing involves some pre-judgements or even prejudices. The hermeneutic approach produces a continuous conversation, or dialectic, which leads to fusion of horizons. This phrase refers to the dynamic interplay between the researcher and the researched. Movement to and fro characterises the whole research process. Meaning is sought but never fully apprehended (Fowler, 1987:110). The concept of "inexhaustible interpretability" familiar to psychoanalysis is also characteristic of hermeneutic studies (Urmson and Ree, 1991:268). The corollary to this is that the researcher's understanding is subject to continual revision and all research "findings" are provisional.

Holub (1991:57) argues that interpretation is always grounded in something we have in advance, something we see in advance and something we grasp in advance. We are filled with pre-understanding. All seeing is theory-laden; what we see already presupposes a kind of theory (Hanson,1981:258). Instead of attempting to remove all such preconceptions, they must be tested critically in

the course of enquiry. Ricoeur suggests that a true hermeneutic theory must include critical elements (Holub,1991:76). This position suggests an answer to the common criticism of grounded theory, that in fact it uses previous theory as a guide to the research process and merely serves to make previous theory more dense (Denzin, 1994:508). Adopting an hermeneutic approach it can be stated that this kind of fore-knowledge is legitimate and even unavoidable. The task of hermeneutics is to subject it to testing, what Addison (1993:119) refers to as "questioning the account".

4.2.3. The fusion of horizons between hermeneutics and grounded theory

The fusion of horizons between these two approaches is found in the constant interplay between the researcher and the researched. A grounded theory approach argues that theory should be developed in a back-and-forth interplay with data (Strauss and Corbin, 1994:282). In the same vein, a to-and-fro movement between the interpreter and the interpreted is a central characteristic of hermeneutics. Within grounded theory, researchers accept responsibility for their role as interpreters. They do not believe it is sufficient merely to report the views of the researched (Strauss and Corbin, 1994:274). The researcher plays an active and interpretive role which fits well with the hermeneutic position that knowledge is achieved by a dialectical interplay with the unfamiliar, based on our foreknowledge and fore-conception (Bernstein, 1983). We are not playing the role of disinterested spectators.

4.2.4. Overcoming the qualitative/quantitative dichotomy

Popkewitz and Tabachnick (1981:vii) suggest that there are multiple ways of knowing and that no one method can answer all our questions. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods are warrantable. The characteristics suggested by Bryman (1988) are useful in distinguishing between the two paradigms and a

discussion of them serves further to illustrate the way in which the present study transcends any apparent dichotomy:

Figure 2 **Research Approaches**

Quantitative	Qualitative
Tests rigorously	Explores actors' interpretations
Distant	Close
Outsider	Insider
Confirming	Emerging
Structured	Unstructured
Nomothetic	Ideographic
Static	Socially constructed by actor
Hard, reliable	Rich,deep

(Adapted from Bryman,1988:94)

One end of this continuum would regard qualitative research as preparatory, investigating in an exploratory way prior to more rigorous testing by quantitative methods. The other pole regards qualitative research as an end in itself, exposing the meanings and interpretations of the researched. It could be that the present study leads to more quantitative research, developing questionnaires which larger numbers of Bank staff and Bank critics could respond to. But the study is conceived of as a contribution to the jigsaw of knowledge. In that sense it is preparatory. However, the inexhaustible interpretability principle within hermeneutics underlines the provisional nature

of all research, be it qualitative or quantitative. In the words of Rorty, every study has been "hammered out" in the course of its history and every study has a role in modifying or shaping the future (Bernstein, 1983:167). A hermeneutic spirit is useful in transcending any apparent dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative methods.

The relationship between researcher and subject may vary from the non-existent to the close and personal. The interview method followed in this study falls somewhere between the two extremes. All the respondents were known personally to the researcher but at varying degrees of closeness. Of course, no relationship could be developed with the documentary sources researched. However, the hermeneutic spirit takes research relationships beyond the superficial level. Research becomes a conversation between the researcher and the researched who include not only the interviewees but the "voices" within the documents. This is an interesting corollary to what Kluckhohn has to say:

> *...informants should be viewed not as actors whose behaviour must be measured, but as documents that reflect the culture of which they are the bearers.*
>
> (In Sherman R. & Webb R. [eds], 1990:76)

Thus, all the sources for the study are people, and all the interviewees are documents. To-and-fro movement between the researcher and the researched constitutes the basic element of interpretation. Physical closeness may not always lead to deeper understanding. Fusion of horizons occurs through the dialectical process. Hermeneutics again overcomes the barriers between qualitative and quantitative approaches.

In many studies, the researcher is an outsider, coming in with a pre-ordained set of questions or framework with which to approach the subjects. It

may in fact be important to try to remain detached. Attempting to see through the eyes of the subjects and to get into their life-world represents the opposite pole. At this end of the continuum, the researcher adopts the role of insider (Bryman, 1988:96). A typical example of this would be the phenomenological approach. In the words of Husserl, "back to the things themselves", or commitment to the greatest possible freedom from pre-suppositions (Urmson and Ree, 1991). The extreme could again be represented as the researcher controlling the reported speech of the subjects as opposed to allowing them to speak for themselves (Goodson and Walker, 1988).

It is of course possible to enter in some degree into other people's ways of thinking, believing and acting. But with the best will in the world, we cannot see things exactly as they do. Beattie (1981) argues that even within our own culture, it is impossible both to be ourselves and to view the world from the position of the researched. However, the researcher in a qualitative paradigm attempts to view reality as supposedly constructed by the researched, achieving empathetic understanding by challenging preconceptions. Within the spirit of hermeneutics, the researcher tries to switch between detachment and involvement. As Gadamer says, "there is a polarity of familiarity and strangeness on which hermeneutic work is based" (Fowler, 1987:110). During the course of the study, the researcher moved between the insider/outsider poles and encouraged his subjects to do the same, thus bridging a dichotomy again. Insider subjects for interview were asked how "outsiders" viewed the Bank; the researcher's own experience of working as a Bank consultant was also used to inform the analysis.

Bryman 1988:97) suggests that deductive research starts from a given theory or set of concepts whilst inductive research sets out to discover rather than verify theory. In practice, research is rarely so neatly compartmentalised.

A fairly sketchy conceptual framework was the beginning of this research study. Is there such a thing as a learning organization and does the World Bank's education division conform to its criteria ? This was the original research question which led to a more inductive approach to the study. Despite grounded theory's strong commitment to the inductive, Glaser and Strauss admit that:

> *the researcher does not approach reality as a tabula rasa. He must have a perspective that will help him see relevant data and abstract significant categories from his scrutiny of the data.*
>
> (Glaser and Strauss,1967:3)

In other words a constant dialectic must be maintained between the data and conceptualisation. The foreshadowed problem or broad fore-knowing of the researcher must be open to question during the process of the research. It is not unusual then in grounded theory to adopt a provisional starting point which may be reshaped during the investigation. Hence, deduction as well as induction may be used.

The hermeneutic standpoint operates on the principle that all understanding is based on pre-conception, no matter how implicit or covert. The great advantage of hermeneutics is that pre-conceptions can be challenged as understanding is gradually deepened and broadened. Once again, any dichotomy between deduction and induction is bridged.

One distinctive feature of the qualitative/quantitative debate is the issue of structured versus unstructured approaches to research. In the present study, interviews and documentary analysis have been adopted at the method level. The form and the content of interviews were semi-structured. The main questions to be discussed were sent in advance to the respondents. To ensure flexibility and "ecological validity" the interview process allowed for departures from the

structure and the following up of new lines of enquiry. Documentary analysis was again loosely structured. The major concepts to be explored - self-reflection, communication of information, governing ideas, informing values, the role of tacit knowledge, established patterns of behaviour - had often to be interpreted or surmised from Bank statements or critiques of Bank policy. Once again, a flexible research strategy was adopted.

Quantitative research usually attempts to establish law-like findings - the nomothetic dimension. This can also be true of certain types of qualitative research. Webster et.al. (1993) in their investigation of parental choice of secondary school, appear to show that presentations by headteachers and "recruitment" materials produced by the schools have little influence over parental choice. Opinions of current "customers" are a dominant force in selection. As a general rule it could thus be argued that schools should not bother with elaborate recruitment procedures or PR presentations by the Head. Vulliamy (1990:161) refers to the trade-off in research between ecological validity and population validity and the present study attempts to reach a balance between the nomothetic and ideographic. The nomothetic is addressed through questioning whether large international organizations can conform to the model of a learning organization. The ideographic is addressed through examining a particular organization at a particular time. Through the latter process, generalisations are developed which resonate with the former question.

The Cartesian Anxiety mentioned earlier refers to the desire to find a fixed reality against which phenomena can be measured. Reality is seen as external to the actor. An alternative view is that reality is socially constructed; multiple realities exist as different actors adopt different world-views. Taylor (1993:185) argues that the true nature of reality can never be fully grasped. This is an

attractive proposition in a world characterised by rapid change. This study therefore assumes a dynamic view of reality rather than a fixed congruence between the model adopted and the phenomena examined.

Bryman (1988:172) suggests that many aspects of the debate about qualitative and quantitative research are unsatisfactory. Each approach has its own strengths and weaknesses. If one is characterised as using "hard and rigorous data", the other adopts a "rich and deep" metaphor. The present study does not attempt to gather data by conventional quantitative research methods. Its emphasis is more on the rich and deep. Yet the limitations of space dictate that richness and depth cannot be too great. This apparent shortcoming is overcome by using a hermeneutic approach.

4.3. Research techniques

4.3.1. Semi-structured interviews

Interviews can be used to obtain details of situations which the researcher cannot witness (Burgess, 1984). Also, the interview is well suited to investigating people's perceptions of phenomena or events. There is a wide variety of views on the activities of the World Bank and the interview is a proper vehicle for sampling these.

The interview exists in many forms and has many uses. Cohen and Manion (1989:307 ff) distinguish between four types of interview - the structured interview, the unstructured interview, the non-directive interview and the focused interview. Kitwood (in Cohen and Manion, 1989:311 ff) also distinguishes between interviews designed for pure information transfer, those which inevitably contain bias and those which represent encounters sharing many of the features of everyday life. In this study interviews have been used partly as a conversation to explore issues and partly in a more structured way to ensure

adequate coverage of the topics selected for investigation. The term "semi-structured interview" has been adopted because the interview schedule (see Annexure), although structured in advance, allowed for the interviewees to go beyond the schedule, to discuss issues arising and to engage in a conversation with the researcher. Holstein and Gubrium (1995) suggest that in conventional interviews, subjects are regarded as "vessels of answers", or mere repositories of facts. For these writers, the trick of this type of interview is to formulate questions and provide an atmosphere conducive to open and undistorted communication between the respondent and the interviewer. The respondent is therefore epistemologically passive, not engaged in the production of knowledge. If the interview is construed as active, the subject creates knowledge. He or she is an active maker of meaning. Traditional views of validity and reliability are replaced when the interview is seen as a dynamic, meaning-making occasion. The circumstances of production are seen as more important than correspondence of answers. As Holstein and Gubrium express it:

> *All participants in an interview are inevitably implicated in making meaning.*
>
> (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995:18)

All the interviews were individual, oral interchanges and were conducted by telephone, a procedure suggested by Philip Jones. It was the task of reviewing his book *World Bank Financing of Education* (Jones, 1992) that first suggested the topic for this dissertation. The subjects had received a set of questions in advance and had agreed to discuss them. All interviews were one-time events.

Interviews by telephone present certain technical and methodological challenges. In fact, the research literature on conducting interviews by telephone

is thin, being mainly focussed on the large-scale commercial type of survey beloved of Gallup and other pollsters. The in-depth interview by telephone is rarely treated in the literature. Practical considerations dictated the use of the telephone. Visits to Washington to interview Bank staff face-to-face were ruled out by considerations of cost and time. A questionnaire for self-completion by subjects was also rejected as there was a low likelihood of response and the qualitative nature of the questions posed could not be addressed adequately.

The advantages of using telephone interviews were perceived to be many. Apart from the cost saving the researcher felt that the more detached nature of the questioning process would lead to a less messy set of responses. There would be little or no interference by contextual influences. The interview would be perceived as taking place on neutral territory. In addition, telephone interviews tend to stick to the points raised. The cost of the call is often prominent in the respondent's mind so little time is wasted. The telephone interview may also be seen as more impersonal, less threatening than a face-to-face event. As the researcher was to find, once the initial telephone contact had been made, the ostensibly impersonal nature of the exchange helped the subjects open up and expand their remarks more than might have happened in more conventional circumstances (see Kitwood (in Cohen and Manion, 1980:319) for arguments in favour of a more 'human' situation for the interview). Babbie (1989) suggests that telephone interviews have a number of advantages, the first being that the interviewer can dress as he or she likes! Social niceties seem to figure strongly in his thinking as the second major advantage Babbie notes is that over the telephone respondents may be more honest and more willing to give socially disapproved views. From the researcher's point of view, using the telephone may also allow the probing of more sensitive areas. On the other hand, Babbie notes

that respondents may be more suspicious if they cannot see you (Babbie, 1989 :251). Bernard (1994) states that questionnaires conducted by telephone, in person or through the mail yield equally valid results. Telephone interviews are often less intimidating and allow probing as with face-to-face interviews (Bernard, 1994:262). He also suggests that a maximum of 20 minutes should govern telephone interviews as subjects get restless and less responsive over longer periods (Bernard, 1994:263).

Other disadvantages of the telephone method must also be mentioned. The most obvious is the lack of non-verbal cues as to what the subjects were actually thinking. No body language was observable. The time given over to the interviews was limited; replies were not expansive. It was perhaps easier to ask leading questions over the telephone - a problem with any type of interview in fact. Fontana and Frey (1994) in an article entitled, *Interviewing, the Art of Science* suggest that all interviewers, whether by phone or face-to-face, must exercise common sense and moral responsibility

...to our subjects first, to the study next and to ourselves last.

(Fontana and Frey, 1994:373)

4.3.2. The interview schedule

To formulate an interview schedule, issues arising from the Bank's policy statements over the last 25 years were integrated with criteria selected from the literature on the learning organization (see Annexure 3 for a copy of the schedule). The interview questions were broad in nature. For example, one item was, "How are successes and failures dealt with in the Bank ? What mechanisms are there for learning from the past?". Issues raised spontaneously by the respondents were welcomed for a richer pattern of information. This approach is justifiable in a study concerned more with meaning than numbers. Within this

research paradigm the purpose of the interview is not so much data collection as to establish meaning and plausible explanations.

Sampling presents problems in this type of study. In classical research designs, sampling approaches depend on the population to be studied (Cohen and Manion, 1989:101). To question quotas or strata of respondents who had experience of the Bank, had been or were employed by them or were in some recognisable position of competence to comment on the workings of the organization presented problems both of scale and of preferred research paradigm. Eventually what Cohen and Manion (1989:103) refer to as *Purposive Sampling* was adopted in that the researcher 'handpicked' the respondents to be included on the basis of his judgement of their competence and typicality. To quote from Cohen and Manion again:

> *In this way (the researcher) builds up a sample that is satisfactory to his specific needs.*
>
> *(Cohen and Manion,1989:103)*

This approach fits well with Glaser and Strauss' notion of 'theoretical sampling' which they define as follows:

> *the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges.*
>
> (Glaser and Strauss,1967:45)

As Figure 2. below illustrates, interviewees were both insiders and outsiders, Bank staff and Bank critics. One informant moved from the inside to the outside during the course of the research. Data from interviews were tape recorded. This

was essential as all the interviews were conducted by telephone. Despite the existence of recorded responses, some reconstruction of what was said inevitably occurred. Even people in elevated academic and professional positions are not invariably coherent and well organized in the spoken medium.

4.3.3. Documentary sources

As noted earlier the World Bank has been prolific in its output of policy and review documents. The bibliography attached to the study gives a full list of all those consulted. The literature critiquing the Bank deserves a special mention, particularly the seminal book by Jones (1992) and the stimulating George and Sabelli (1994). Chapter 5 below indicates in detail the Bank literature and the critical literature reviewed. Suffice it to state at this point that the researcher attempted to examine an appropriate spread of documentation.

Figure 3: **Research Design: Insiders and Outsiders**

	Insiders	Outsiders
People	Bank staff	Bank critics
Documents	Bank papers, policy statements etc.	Published critiques

4.3.4. Data analysis

Within the discipline of hermeneutics a constant interplay between the data and conceptualisation is an important feature of the data analysis process. This is somewhat parallel to the constant comparison methods of grounded theory. Constant comparison generates plausible categories, properties and hypotheses

about the problem under investigation (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Addison (1993) provides a first-hand account of how hermeneutics work in practice for the researcher. He describes hermeneutic data analysis as a "necessarily circular procedure". Whilst immersed in observing events, writing notes and recording interviews he "moved back and forth between collecting, analysing, reflecting and writing in such a way that cannot be laid out or predicted in advance" (Addison, 1993:116). All these activities were carried out in the light of the practical research question under consideration - in this study's case, "Does the World Bank operate like a learning organization?" Addison developed a coding system to make sense of his data, a global approach in which key or recurrent phrases or terms were recorded from a variety of responses and an "in vivo" coding from what was actually said by his respondents. Out of this collection of words and phrases a visual display of cards and notes was put together. Soon, common threads became detectable, organizing themes evolved. Notes and transcripts were re-examined to find further references to the key themes and the "hermeneutic circle", from understanding to interpretation to deeper understanding to more comprehensive interpretation was achieved.

Too much activity within the hermeneutic circle has its dangers for the researcher too. As Miles and Huberman (1994:11) suggest an extended text can overload our information handling capacities and may result in the "finding" of oversimplified patterns. Strauss and Corbin (1990) have suggested means for raising levels of theoretical sensitivity by using techniques such as *flip-flop*, where a concept is turned upside down to encourage more extreme comparisons. Theoretical sensitivity is important in grounded theory as it develops an awareness of the subtleties of meaning within data and it relates to the capacity to develop theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:41). For the past fifteen years the

writer has been interested in the workings of the World Bank, both at first hand and from the literature. This experience has in Strauss and Corbin's terms enhanced theoretical sensitivity. However, there is an implicit danger in the use of experience, that of "going native", or at least taking certain issues for granted. By using the concept of the learning organization as a lens for studying the Bank, the researcher has attempted to make the familiar strange, thus avoiding going native and at the same time enhancing theoretical sensitivity.

The balance between involvement and detachment is another important issue in qualitative research. It is essential for the researcher to "listen beyond" what is said by respondents and to search for hidden meanings. "What has been said" and "what was left unsaid" have to be taken into account. In other words, manifest narrative as well as hidden narrative must be recognised. As an outsider, the researcher needs to take time to grasp the world-view of the subjects and unconscious bias may present a pitfall (Halls,1990). Interpretation in research must be influenced by the position of the researcher (Spindler and Spindler, 1993). Beattie (1981) also argues that it is a commonplace that people see what they expect to see and the categories of their perceptions are governed by their social and cultural backgrounds. However, all knowledge springs from the interaction of the object being investigated and the culturally-shaped researcher (Thomas, 1994), a limitation in this as in any similar study. The following warning applies to all researchers, not just the comparativists at whom it was originally aimed:

> *....unconscious bias has exercised researchers in comparative education greatly in recent years.* (Halls, 1990:27)

This serves to introduce the important concept in qualitative research of triangulation.

4.3.5. Triangulation and Qualitative Research

Originally borrowed from land-surveying, the concept of triangulation is closely related to the quantitative tradition (Bryman, 1988:131). The central idea of triangulation is to cross-check different findings against each other (Bryman and Burgess, 1984). This process is expected to produce validity (Jary and Jary, 1991), or a check on whether the test or procedure in use really measures what it was supposed to measure. There are numerous methods of triangulation but four dimensions are normally utilised - data, investigator, theory and method (Bryman, 1988; Burgess, 1984; McKernan, 1991). Method is the most commonly tested dimension and it usually refers to the use of more than one method of data collection within a single study.

Inconsistencies among different sets of data are not uncommon. The problem in such circumstances is to know which to adopt as the most valid. Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) have argued that one data source cannot be used unproblematically to validate another. When the metaphor of triangulation is transferred to a qualitative study, the problems become more profound. The underlying epistemology of a quantitative study is that there is an external reality "out there" somewhere which can be measured. By triangulating, the researcher focuses down and identifies that reality by reference to other fixed points. However, most qualitative researchers work on the assumption that **multiple** realities exist within us as well as "out there". The well documented accounts of inconsistencies among eye-witnesses to an accident or crime bear this out. Victims or perpetrators can be tall, short, dark, light, fat, thin, male or female when eye-witness accounts are tabulated. Socially constructed reality is evident; objectivity and validity become less significant. As Denzin (1994:507) puts it, all texts are biased, reflecting the influence of class, gender, ethnicity and culture.

Triangulation in qualitative research is usually taken to correspond with validity in quantitative research. But, as Wu (1995) has indicated, there may be a "metaphor mismatch" if triangulation is used unproblematically in qualitative research. Her argument is that it is quite possible for qualitative research to operate on a positivist model, more frequently associated with quantitative studies. In cases like this it is quite legitimate to use triangulation. However, if multiple reality is the epistemological underpinning, external and fixed reality, the basis of triangulation, cannot be entertained. She offers the following matrix to illustrate her case:

Figure 4 **Research and Triangulation**

	With Triangulation	Without Triangulation
Qualitative research based on an external reality metaphor	*II* (Metaphors match)	I *Type II error*
Qualitative research based on a metaphor of multiple reality	III (Metaphor mismatch) *Type 1 error*	IV (Neo-triangulation)

(From Wu, 1995:86)

Wu's analysis suggests that when a qualitative study uses triangulation to confirm reality then a metaphor mismatch occurs, a Type 1 error. However, when a qualitative study uses the techniques devised by triangulation as a means to identify and track down multiple meanings or realities then this is a legitimate use of triangulation within the qualitative epistemology (see Figure 4.2.above). In order to distinguish between the two techniques, she has coined the term "neo-triangulation".

4.3.6. The concept of Neo-triangulation

In qualitative research the scope of the term triangulation has to be extended and enriched. Many qualitative researchers use triangulation, but not in its cross-checking or validation sense (Bryman and Burgess, 1994:223). Wolcott (1994:369) argues that to identify critical elements in data and to seek plausible explanations is more acceptable than a search for ultimate truth. Perfect validity is probably unattainable anyway. For these reasons, Wu's concept of neo-triangulation has been adopted in this study whose focus is on meaning and explanation rather than reliability and validity in a more positivist sense.

4.3.7. The strategy of multiple methods

In this study, an attempt has been made to use the widely recognised strategy of multiple methods. Documentary analysis as well as interviews have been employed. The use of multiple investigators has been used in the sense that interviews have been conducted with Bank officials and with Bank critics. In the same way, Bank documents have been examined as well as documents critical of the Bank. In this way, "outsiders" as well as "insiders" have been questioned.

4.4. Summary

A qualitative approach has been adopted in this study because of the nature of the enquiry, an exploratory investigation of certain characteristics of the World Bank. The research techniques employed include semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis. A hermeneutic strategy is the main approach to data analysis. Hermeneutics allows for some bridging of the traditional gap between quantitative and qualitative research. The overall aim of this combination of approaches is to achieve fusion of horizons, a successful transition from current reality to the world we seek to appraise.

Addison (1993:124) concludes the account of his hermeneutic approach as follows:

I do not believe that (my) account corresponds with or reconstructs 'reality'. Rather, I generated an interpretive account that looks at a crucial period (in the process of becoming a physician); provides an interpretation of how distress developed and was maintained; describes the conditions, context and problematic atmosphere of the process; discusses the costs and significance of the process for the residents, their families and health care; and suggests directions for improving physician training. The account can be modified as time, social conditions and individuals change.

Similar aims inform the present study.

CHAPTER 5 : THE WORLD BANK AS A LEARNING ORGANIZATION: WHAT THE PAPERS SAY

> **The World Bank lies at the centre of the major changes in global education of our time. Its financial power and influence have helped shaped the economic and social policies of many governments, including policies that affect education**
>
> Philip Jones, 1992

5.1. Introduction

The foregoing chapters have shown that the concept of the learning organization has much to offer for the more effective management and operation of an organization. It has also been seen that certain characteristics define learning organizations - they are participatory, democratic and creative; they are system-based and informational; they are action-based. In addition, learning organizations are open and reflective, they perceive their situation as complex and problematic and they attempt to make sense of the world. Perhaps most significantly they harness the collective genius of the organization **by design.** Strategies and structures do not arise by accident but are purposefully established (see Table 1 in Chapter 2 above).

This study now goes on to examine the workings of the World Bank in order to assess its standing as a learning organization. Implicit in this enquiry is the assumption that learning organizations are better at what they do than organizations which do not or cannot learn. Still more deeply implicit in the study is the preconception that the Bank probably may not conform to the characteristics of a learning organization. But in the true spirit of grounded theory in partnership with hermeneutics the evidence must be adduced and

subjected to analysis before understanding is reached.

The chosen evidence on which to base an assessment of the Bank as a learning organization is fourfold. First the documentary evidence is examined and then the evidence drawn from a number of interviews. Documents from within and from outside the Bank are analysed. Subjects from within and without the Bank are interviewed leading to the fourfold design tabulated below:

Figure 5 : Research Evidence: The Fourfold Design

Source	Insider	Outsider
Documents	Bank publications e.g. 1974/80/95 Policy papers	Published critiques
People	Bank staff, e.g. education specialists	Bank commentators,e.g. academics, former Bank staff

Dealing with the research evidence presents the researcher with an organizational and conceptual problem. The interview schedule prepared for the 'people dimension' of the study has obvious limitations in being applied to documents. What the documents say is one thing. What they imply is another and how they are interpreted is yet one more view. Integrating the evidence from the people and the documents had obvious attractions for the coherence of the study yet, in the spirit of neo-triangulation, and for practical reasons, it was decided to look at documents and people separately and then to attempt an integrative

exercise to complete the hermeneutic circle. It must also be noted that separating documentary and human evidence provides a barrier to over-integration or the finding of over-simplified patterns. Theoretical sensitivity is also enhanced by this separation of data sources.

5.2. The documentary sources

The World Bank has been a prolific producer of documentation, not just concerning education but covering all aspects of its work in both the developed and developing worlds. Of specific interest to the present study has been its output on educational matters. Significant among this extensive output have been the policy or sector papers published in 1974, 1980 and 1995 (World Bank 1974,1980,1995). In addition, a wide variety of additional regional or topic-based papers have been produced. Prominent among these have been the 1988 paper, *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policies for Adjustment,Revitalization and Expansion* (World Bank, 1988). These four major publications form the prime focus for the 'insider' documentary analysis although, as noted in Chapter 3 above, other significant Bank publications have not been neglected.

'Outsider' documentary sources are more numerous than the insider product. For every paper produced by the Bank a multiplicity of critical responses can be expected, some positive, many negative. For the researcher there is a temptation to take the easier road of simply pulling together the best of a rich vein of 'Bank-bashing' literature. Yet it must be repeated that the Bank is not monolithic and much of what it pronounces is well received. It must also be said that it is easier to find critics of its pronounced educational policies than to find whole-hearted supporters. Part of the reason for this is the Bank's own approach to its published output. It rarely if ever employs or promotes the views of more radical educational thinkers. It would be unthinkable for an Everett

Reimer, a Paulo Freire or an Ivan Illich to be found among the Bank's authors, commentators or even as participants in Bank seminars. An examination of the participants at the Jomtien Conference 'Education for All' held in Indonesia in 1990 reveals a predictable list of educationalists, some of whom, it must be admitted, are on record as critics of Bank policy. Yet the overwhelming weight of published evidence from the Bank itself is 'insider' originated. However, further discussion of this issue is deferred until the documentary sources are examined more thoroughly below.

5.3 The insider literature; selected Bank documents

Any selection offers an opportunity for demonstrating bias yet those Bank documents which are most prominent and which would be regarded as presenting the most obvious statements of Bank thinking, policy and action have been selected. They are also representative of a spread of Bank output over time, from 1974 to 1995. The selected documents also deal with the broader issues of policy, a focus which it is held will more clearly indicate whether a learning organization is at work or not. Since 1980, in addition to its annual *World Development Reports*, the Bank has produced 16 major statements on policy (see Bibliography for *Priorities and Strategies for Education*, World Bank, 1995). In addition, publications authored by Bank staff or nominees have been numerous [e.g.Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1985);Levin and Lockheed (1990);Lockheed and Verspoor (1991); Zidermann and Albrecht (1995)]. The Bank has also been prolific in its production of internal discussion papers and keeping up with the Bank's output in education alone is a serious challenge. In order to make the present study manageable, the following Bank publications have therefore been selected for specific analysis:

- Education Sector Working Paper (1974)

- Education Sector Policy Paper (1980)
- Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (1988)
- Priorities and Strategies for Education (1995)

The earlier discussion of Chapter 3 , particularly sections 3.4.3 and 3.4.4., dealt with additional Bank literature. Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) and *Higher Education;The Lessons of Experience* (1994) were examined for their reflection of the characteristics of a learning organization. In other words, an attempt has been made to look at a representative spread of Bank material.

5.4. What the papers say - the output of a learning organization ?

As an introductory statement concerning the World Bank papers, it must be noted that certain overarching themes or theoretical positions govern the way the Bank presents its papers and policies. Foremost among these has always been the economists' view of the value and purpose of education as opposed to the pedagogues' view or the social administrators' view. The tight coupling of the Bank's educational policies with its economic policies is a given. This wedding of educational policy to economic policy presents one of the most intractable barriers to the Bank's operation as a true learning organization. Put simply, the Bank has always viewed education as a dimension of economic activity; it is there to serve economic rather than social or individual developmental missions. This view is allegedly changing as the researcher's interviews with Bank staff reveal below. However, the starting point of a discussion of the Bank's documentation is the dominance of a specific economic paradigm in education and the consequent use by the Bank of cost-benefit analysis (CBA) and the education production function (EPF) as tools for the analysis of education (see Hough, 1992; Bennell, 1995; Simmons, 1980). Briefly, the Bank argues that the only effective way to measure the quality of education, by which is meant formal schooling, is by

measuring its contribution to economic growth and development. Hence its aims for education will always be couched in these terms.

Within this economic development paradigm, the World Bank in its early years concentrated on projects in technical and vocational education at various levels and on general secondary education to meet the needs for trained manpower in the developing countries (World Bank, 1980:78). So-called 'hardware' projects involving construction and equipment were the preferred mode of operation in the 1960s. By 1971, a 'systematic study of the total education sector of a country as a prerequisite to financing' (World Bank, 1980:78) had largely replaced the bricks and mortar approach of the previous decade. Construction was still regarded as important but a concern for quality and for manpower training was emphasised. New areas for lending were suggested to include non-formal education and training, educational broadcasting, local production of learning materials and support for management and administration. Commenting on the 1974 *Education Sector Working Paper*, Williams (1975) was concerned that despite these shifts, gaps were still visible between the Bank's policies and the development realities of many low income countries.

This judgement raises the question of whether, at this early stage, the Bank was becoming set in its ways or whether it was learning from its experience. Before going more deeply into the selected literature it is worth asking what signs or indications of a learning organization might be expected from the Bank's published output. Revisiting the analysis of Chapter Two above, especially Table 1, *Characteristics of Learning Organizations*, the following salient signs or indicators may be looked for in the Bank's published output:

- Evidence of shared deep basic assumptions
- Signs of an open, participatory, action-based, informational and creative

organizational culture

- Indications of clear defining values; ideas thought to be important include participation, purpose and vision, appropriate information loads, situations perceived as complex, being open to self-criticism, attempting to make sense of the world
- Evidence of successes and failures being dealt with openly as a basis for learning; meaning being shared in an enabling environment and legitimate errors being accepted
- Indications that knowledge and information are shared openly, that there are high levels of interaction, good ideas emanate from anyone and feedback mechanisms function well
- Evidence that information is generated through experience, it is absorbed effectively and differing viewpoints are accepted
- Evidence that knowledge is contributed by all and integrated into the organization in a planned way through systematic processes.

In sum, the literature produced by a learning organization to announce its strategies, rationale, policies and actions should reflect the qualities above.

It must be admitted that mere documentary analysis may not reveal all that is being sought, hence the importance of the interviews with Bank insiders and outsiders which complement the study of the documents - neo-triangulation in practice. Table 2 below represents an abstract of the main themes and statements of each document. This table is the beginning of what Addison (1993) describes as the "hermeneutic circle". As the documents were reviewed, analysed and summarised, so key themes and issues presented themselves to the researcher. A visual display of notes was assembled as Addison described and then the display was examined for signs of change and development. From the documentary

sources categories were arrived at - areas of little or no change, areas of limited change, areas of significant change and areas difficult to categorize. This fourfold grouping informed the later analyses of critical documentary sources and the oral information given by subjects interviewed. Hermeneutics then gives rise to a complex of interpretation - what was said by whom and what level of change did the statement indicate ? Within this complexity lies another hermeneutic technique - questioning the account. As will be seen below, contradictions occur. The Bank is not monolithic nor entirely internally consistent. Questioning the account and constantly revisiting the categories confer validity in Glaser and Strauss' terms as part of theory development and not as some final product control, building into the research process checks of the "credibility, plausibility and trustworthiness" of the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:223). So what did this first hermeneutic exercise in neo-triangulation reveal?

Areas of little or no change

a) Where do Bank policies come from?

Broadly speaking the Bank's policy statements are internally produced. The level of external input has risen over the period since 1974; however, the 'external' inputs remain largely Bank commissioned or from 'friends' of the Bank. This raises serious questions about how the Bank deals with information and knowledge. According to Dixon (1994) the widespread generation of information characterises learning organizations. The Bank appears on this evidence to fall short. Much more on this issue was revealed through the interviews and, as a key category of analysis, it will be returned to below.

b) What does the Bank see as important in the educational field ?

The focus over the years has always been on the role of formal education with little or no importance placed on non-formal approaches. The discussion in the

1974 paper (World Bank, 1974:11) has segued into a work-related training debate in the 1980 paper (World Bank, 1980:42). Although this consistency fits in well with a learning organization's quality of shared deep basic assumptions, it might also indicate a kind of inflexibility. Could these shared assumptions have ossified? If in Senge's (1990) terms learning organizations are generative rather than adaptive, one would look for evidence of the Bank generating new responses to changing realities. Morgan (1986) notes that learning organizations attempt to make sense of a complex world. Planned change of focus would seem inevitable in any organization. Yet the Bank falls short here too.

c) What themes characterise Bank statements on education ?

Efficiency has been a recurring theme throughout all the papers examined; internal efficiency is defined as getting schools to raise cognitive achievement levels of pupils; external efficiency is defined as preparing pupils adequately for economic activity in the modern sector. Linked as these ideas are with the overall economistic outlook of the Bank it is perhaps not surprising to find them repeatedly appearing in the literature. Yet the economic indicators of countries in the poorer parts of the world clearly show that economic development has not taken off in sufficient strength to provide the modern sector employment essential for these aims to be realistic. The *World Bank Annual Report for 1995* states, concerning sub-Saharan Africa:

> *Although there has been relatively less progress overall on the deeper structural elements of the development agenda, successful examples can be pointed to. Twenty-one countries (of 34) achieved positive per capita income growth during 1988-93. About half (i.e. ten) attained or exceeded growth rates of between 4 per cent and 5 per cent annually.*
>
> (World Bank Annual Report, 1995:56)

This is hardly an account of overwhelming success in modernizing sub-Saharan Africa. The modern sector remains a distant target for most school leavers. More realistically, in the same report the Bank admits that , "it is impossible to speak of sub-Saharan Africa as an undifferentiated whole" (World Bank Annual report, 1995:56). Yet the prescriptions for progress are exactly that - undifferentiated.

d) What means does the Bank use for measuring educational progress?

Economic tools for measuring the effectiveness of education have always been favoured by the Bank. Manpower planning was utilised in the 1970s but the apparently more sophisticated cost-benefit analysis procedures brought in during the 1980s remain a major technology by which the Bank measures success in education. Despite passing references to the cultural and civilizing effects of schooling in the 1995 paper, little or no use is made of social and cultural indicators for the effectiveness of schooling. Referring again to the 1995 *World Bank Annual Report* the Bank states:

> *Lending for basic social needs during fiscal 1995 alone amounted to $3,907 million; $2,097 million for education sector projects; $1,162 for projects and components in the population, health and nutrition sector; and $648 million for projects in the social sector.... The Bank's long-term vision in the area of human capital formation is to help developing countries reach the point where inadequate investments in people no longer hold back growth or keep people in poverty.*
>
> (World Bank Annual Report, 1995:18)

Inadequate investments in people typify the Bank's view of the problem with education in the developing world. The aims and content of that schooling experience are rarely discussed.

e) What is the role of schooling in the developing world ?

Relevance was a key term for the Bank's educators of the 1970s. Although, like freedom, relevance is a relational concept (the question must be asked, "Relevance to what?"), it is only defined by the Bank implicitly - relevance to economic development. By the 1995 paper, relevance has become more explicit - schooling is to develop 'adaptable workers for changing economies' - but the theme of all the Bank's papers is unchanged. Schooling is to prepare youth for productive work in the modern sector. Lip service is paid by the Bank to "improving the quality of life" as a development aim in the broadest sense. But this is defined by the Bank largely in terms of higher incomes (World Bank Annual Report, 1995:18).

But the unchanging nature of much of the Bank's rhetoric and practice is not universal. There are signs of adaptation and even generation.

Areas of limited change

a) What aspects of education has the Bank emphasised ?

An early emphasis on hardware - buildings, equipment, materials - has to some extent been replaced by more of an emphasis on software - the teacher, the managers, what happens in the classroom. The 1995 paper *Priorities and Strategies for Education* is particularly strong on this with its emphasis on improving the quality of education by raising the students' capacity and motivation to learn, improving the curriculum, developing teachers who know their subjects and can teach them, providing adequate time for learning and providing the requisite tools for teaching and learning. Yet even within this more hopeful scenario there are numerous signs that the Bank has failed to learn from past experience. "Sound-bite policies" are in abundant evidence. Determinants of effective learning are tabulated on page 83 of the document referred to (World Bank, 1995). Libraries are shown in a histogram as having the greatest effect on

pupil learning. At least, that is the impression given by the bar-chart. Closer inspection reveals that 90% of studies dealing with the effectiveness of libraries on pupil performance show a positive effect; almost the same can be said of "instructional time" as a determinant of pupil achievement. Class size is at the opposite end of the scale with only 38% of studies showing that it had a positive effect on pupil performance. Fuller and Clarke (1994) are given as the sources of this information. Yet such sound-bite solutions to complex issues raise a variety of questions - What sort of libraries - class libraries, school libraries, circulating book boxes ? How frequently do pupils use them ? Under staff supervision or by free access ? Do they simply read or carry out structured assignments ? Is a qualified librarian necessary or even essential ? Are books borrowed or simply referred to ?

It is not enough to say that serious enquirers should go back to the original research which was collated by Fuller and Clarke. Busy Permanent Secretaries seeking answers to pressing problems will be seduced by colourful histograms. In brief, the switch from hardware solutions to software solutions seems to be as beset with difficulties as ever. Limited change is no real change here. Broader questions of how the Bank deals with information - a characteristic indicator of the true learning organization - must be raised at this point. As becomes clear through the interviews discussed below, there is a strong sense among Bank critics of the organization selecting strategies or answers, presenting them as unproblematically as possible and then declaring, "Research tells us...". (see, for instance, World Bank, 1995:22,28 and 73).

b) Have the significant themes of Bank policy changed ?

Equity was a significant theme of the 1974 paper. Over the years this has been accompanied by emphases on access and quality with gender equity assuming a

more dominant role in the 1995 paper (World Bank, 1995:43ff). This change is to be welcomed yet it has usually been discussed in the Bank documentation in a context and culture-free way. Typical is the Bank's treatment of female enrolment. The 1995 paper places great emphasis on the statistical dimension of the gender gap in enrolments; girls in South Asia could expect 6.0 years of schooling whereas boys could expect 8.9 years (1990 figures). But the 1995 paper also reports and supports concrete measures to improve girls' levels of enrolment by the provision of stipends, increasing the number of women teachers and conducting community awareness programmes (World Bank, 1995:115). The Bank does seem to learn from experience that pleading the case for greater equity in access and greater quality in provision demands concrete proposals which will bring about change. Yet there is a lingering suspicion that deeper understanding of why girls do not attend or why parental choice is a nonsensical concept in rural Tanzania remains outside the Bank's policy prescriptions.

c) Have sources for policy formulation changed ?

The 1974 paper makes no bones about its prescription of externally developed policies. The 1980 paper lays claim to some local market research in its recommendations. The 1988 paper is unashamedly clear about prescribing policies from the 'successful' economies of the West. By 1995, the Bank's policy paper is referring to 'stakeholders', lays claim to lessons from research and experience and tries to couch its prescriptions in global language. What is successful in the "Tiger" economies and in the more developed nations of the West - privatisation, market competition, less government - informs the discourse. The apparent contradiction of global solutions based on stakeholder research is easily squared in Bank-speak. The question must be raised, "Which 'stakeholders' is the Bank referring to?" There are no references in the research-heavy 1995 paper to

experience from Cuba, Senegal, the People's Republic of China or any of the other countries where alternative economic models are in use. Those studies which come from former socialist economies like Romania, Poland or Mongolia focus on the problems of 'transition', the process of becoming like the West (World Bank, 1995:171). A relatively naive, positivist reliance on economic articles of faith is evident throughout the period referred to. Any change is very limited indeed.

Areas of significant change

a) What type of schooling is recommended ?

Whereas vocational education was an emphasis of the 1974 paper, by the 1980s the focus had moved to general secondary education and latterly to basic education as a priority. This of course presents its own problems, particularly for those countries which borrowed and invested on the strength of earlier Bank prescriptions. This criticism is particularly acute in the case of higher education. Huge amounts of investment were devoted to the universities of emergent Africa, often supported by Bank loans. A 511% increase in tertiary enrolments was recorded by the Bank between 1950 and 1970 (World Bank, 1974:13). In the late 1990s governments are left with expensive plant and staff, ambitious students and a vacuum in funding and support. The Colclough World Bank Staff Working Paper (World Bank,1980) entitled *Primary Schooling and Economic Development;A Review of the Evidence*, must be seen as a very significant event in Bank policy formulation. Although the paper points more to the failings of the secondary sector than to hard evidence of the advantages of investment in the primary sector, Bank embracing of the cheaper, more populist provision became institutionalized. Careful analysis of the evidence for basic/primary education's greater private and public rates of return in developing countries reveals very substantial doubts about its validity. Yet, as witnessed in the Jomtien Conference,

Education for All, investment in basic/primary education is now an article of faith. How the Bank deals with information, especially that which clashes with its own ideology, presents a very serious criticism of its function as a learning organization.

b) Who pays for education ?

Public financing of education in the 1970s as a policy imperative has gradually been replaced by a shift towards more private funding in the 1980 paper, a mix of public and private in the 1988 paper and finally, in 1995 to a stronger emphasis on cost-sharing and 'household involvement' and less reliance on public finance for schooling. As early as the 1974 paper the Bank was asking questions about who pays for schooling and suggesting that governments spending more than 20% of public expenditure on education were likely to damage other deserving sectors (World Bank, 1974:21). The paper goes on to ventriloquise the proposals of "some analysts" that school fees should be introduced or increased to lower demand and to share costs more equitably. These proposals are linked with the highly impractical suggestion that earning differentials should be reduced between groups with different educational attainments (World Bank, 1974:23). It is interesting to contrast this Stalinist notion in the 1974 paper with the *Thatcherite views of the place of the* market in determining who pays for education found in the 1995 paper. Is this knowledge generated by experience and integrated into the organization ? Or does it represent an urgent search for solutions to the intractable problem in the Third World of how to fund increasing demands for schooling ? Borrowing solutions from the affluent West where parents, albeit unwillingly in many cases, will use their spare capacity to finance their children's education; in the countries of the poorest of the poor this scenario is unlikely to run.

Areas more difficult to categorize

a) The issue of quality

Concerns with quality in education have been expressed by the Bank from time to time. They are found more strongly emphasised in the 1988 and 1995 papers. As early as 1974 the Bank was concerned about the question of relevance, stating rather sweepingly that:

> *Education systems have been irrelevant to the needs of developing countries during the last two decades because education policies were often keeping company with overall development strategies which were themselves irrelevant to the societies and conditions of developing countries.*
>
> (World Bank, 1974:3)

This linking of educational policy with development policy was referred to earlier. Questions have also been raised about the appropriateness of current Bank development policies and the continuing linkage of educational strategies to perceived economic goals. Defining quality has become a more sophisticated art since 1974. The 1980 paper remained largely focused on relevance as the key quality factor (World Bank, 1980:21). The 1988 paper focused very much on cognitive achievement of pupils as the crucial quality factor (World Bank, 1988:31). The 1995 paper takes a more elaborated view, dealing with a variety of "inputs" as key factors in quality. As for changes in Bank behaviour detectable from these shifts, suffice it to say that broad generalizations have been replaced by technical solutions to what are complex problems. It has been stated earlier that a characteristic of the learning organization is that it sees the world as a complex place. This is not always true of the World Bank.

b) Issues of management.

Proposals for improving the management of education are found in all the papers

under discussion. In this sense there is no change. The 1974 paper emphasises macro-planning and management (World Bank, 1974:6). The 1980 paper devotes much more space to management, administration, planning and research (World Bank, 1980:53 - 58). Even greater detail in prescriptions is to be found in the 1988 paper (World Bank, 1988:81 - 92). The 1995 paper makes an interesting departure. Rather than the usual section on management and administration of education, the paper looks at issues like decentralization, the creation of more autonomous institutions, developing more creative funding procedures and generally getting the 'stakeholders' more involved in education (World Bank, 1995: 126 ff). Is it possible to detect some learning from experience, or do these measures simply represent the application of free market strategies tried in the West and now applied more generally ?

c) Pupil achievement and 'standards'

A concern for academic standards is more evident in the 1980, 1988 and 1995 papers. The 1980 paper focuses on efficiency in learning, improvements to the curriculum, teacher education and instructional materials (World Bank 1980,30 ff). Books and supplies are the emphasis of the 1988 paper (World Bank, 1988:45) and the 1995 paper heads one of its sections of recommendations as "Attention to Outcomes" (World Bank, 1995:94). The Bank's expressions of concern about academic standards must be seen within the research framework adopted. Over the period during which the four selected papers were produced the Bank has shown a heavy reliance upon positivist research of the school effectiveness/determinants of cognitive achievement type (see, for example, Simmons, 1980). This kind of research specializes in separating out variables which can be identified as more or less important in determining pupil achievement. From such studies it can be deduced that the successful pupil is

a boy attending a boarding school which has well educated (but not necessarily trained) teachers. Adequate time-on-task is provided in an environment where success is valued, leadership is exercised and there is a common understanding among teachers of the mission of the school. In addition, this successful boy will come from a home where the parents are educated, where an international language is spoken and where books, newspapers and other media are available. The research findings on which these prescriptions are based are frequently conflicting (see Table 16 in Simmons, 1980:86-87). The controversial IEA studies are often used by the Bank to buttress its prescriptions (see World Bank, 1995:167) despite real concerns about the comparability of such international tests (see, for example, Vaizey in Purves and Levine (1975:161) and Theisen in Altbach and Kelly,1986). A concern for academic standards in the Bank's output is not unexpected but questions must be raised about whether this is another example of 'Back to Basics' or whether there are genuine educational reasons for this emphasis.

5.5. Summing up the summary

What can this summary tell us about the Bank's status as a learning organization? If the criteria identified earlier are now applied to the Bank's publications, is it possible to relate areas of greater or lesser change to those criteria ?

The **shared assumptions** of the Bank's education division seem to be clear enough. Formal education as the key to modernization and economic development has always been an article of faith with the Bank. It is represented strongly in the four documents referred to. Only in the 1995 statement is there reference to the cultural and civilizing dimensions of schooling. By this criterion the Bank is a learning organization. It has a consistency in its shared assumptions but may

show evidence of a change in behaviour as the more social and cultural aspects of formal schooling are recognised.

An **open and participatory culture** ? Certainly the evidence from the documents appears to show that a shift has occurred in the Bank's use of outsiders in formulating its policies. The 1974 paper had a total of ten academic references. By 1980 this had risen to 65. The 1995 paper has 275 references, 100 of them coming from internal sources or staff members. Of the remaining 175, many are publications by Bank staff or associates which are found in academic journals. There is no doubt that there is an appearance of more openness and participation. In addition, it should be noted that the Bank normally invites a selected group of academics and critics to comment on drafts of its major papers (see World Bank, 1995:xiii). This reference group is usually named in the acknowledgements along with a 'Bankwide advisory panel'. In a personal communication from a participant in such an exercise, it was revealed that contributions from the reference group for the 1995 paper were not incorporated into the final version. Thus there is a perception among Bank critics that the procedure for openness and participation is in place but it is more a matter of appearance than reality. This issue will be returned to as the critics of the Bank's documents are discussed below.

Clear defining values are another mark of the learning organization which sees its world as complex whilst trying to make sense of it. The Bank documents referred to fail to match up to this criterion. Situations are not seen as complex. General solutions, for example, adjustment, revitalization and selective expansion, are offered for what are often country-specific problems. One of the interviewees within the Bank refers to this phenomenon as 'sound-bite answers to complex problems' (see below). Seeking new sources of finance is offered as a solution to

economic difficulties in providing schooling - this for countries where even the Bank admits the poor are already paying too much towards the education of their own and other's children. It can be argued that the Bank has clear defining values. These are revealed in the documents and in the interviews discussed below. But these values do not match the vision of a learning organization which attempts to make sense of the real world, rather than a world constructed in Washington.

The learning organization deals with its **successes and failures** in specific ways. It is impossible to find in the Bank's documents any indication that the policies and projects of the past have failed. Experience is referred to in tandem with research as the basis for the policy selections found in the 1995 paper. That experience seems always to have been positive. Yet Bank projects fail. An example is found in an annex to this study. Nowhere is failure recognised or dealt with, even euphemistically.

Knowledge and information are shared openly in learning organizations. The evidence for and against this is more clearly perceived through the interviews below but analysis of the sources of information used by the Bank indicates that restricted sources of information are used by the Bank. The vast majority of information is generated in the West, and in the United States in particular. The 1995 paper lists 275 references. Only 10 of them come from developing world sources with another 2 drawn from overseas offices of USAID. If the sources of information are seen to be restricted it is not unfair to conclude that open sharing of knowledge and information within the organization may function but that sharing is of information from severely constrained sources.

Knowledge and information are generated through experience in the learning organization. This seems to indicate a reflective approach to the review of

experience; efforts are made to make sense of what has happened and to gain from the reflection process. The 1995 paper *Priorities and Strategies for Education*, (World Bank, 1995) begins its substantive discussion on page 17 with the heading, *The Record of Experience and the Tasks Ahead.* Unfortunately little or no real experience is referred to or drawn upon. Rather the document concentrates on assertions like,

> *The spread of education has reduced poverty by helping developing countries' economies grow at historically rapid rates.*
>
> (World Bank, 1995:17)
>
> *In addition, education contributes to the strengthening of the institutions of civil society, to national capacity building and to good governance..*
>
> (World Bank, 1995:19)

No evidence is adduced to support these assertions, no 'record of experience' is quoted from. More positively, the Bank's document goes on to point out that although education contributes to economic growth, of itself it will not generate growth. This only occurs where other conditions are right - such conditions as the right mix of investment in human and physical capital in a competitive market, which itself is the product of macroeconomic stability, well functioning labour markets and an openness to international trade and modern technology. These are conditions which few western economies enjoy, let alone those of the poorest countries in the world. It seems a counsel of despair to suggest that investment in schooling only pays off under these rare and unreliable conditions. Yet the critic detects a shift from the simplistic statements of earlier days, for example, Harbison and Myers' dictum that 'education is the key that unlocks the door to modernization' (Harbison and Myers,1964). Reflection on the Bank's experience would surely have lead to more realistic goals for formal schooling

than to see modern education systems in developing countries as viable only when part of complex, inter-related economic patterns of development. Analysis of the documents seems to indicate clearly that very little real reflection on experience goes on within the Bank. The same economic models are embraced, albeit with a switch between 1974 and 1995 from Manpower Planning as the major tool for educational development towards Cost Benefit Analysis, an equally suspect technology (Hough, 1992; Bennell,1995).

5.6. What the critics of the papers say.

Once again, a selection process must be undergone and a representative spread in time as well as viewpoint is used. Rather than attempting a comprehensive presentation of each critic's views, selected issues are subjected to examination through the lens of the learning organization in much the same way that the Bank's own papers were assessed.

The starting point is an examination of the Bank's **deep basic assumptions and beliefs.** Note has already been taken of the Bank's strongly economistic view of the world. After all, this is a Bank under examination, not a philanthropic society. Gibbon et.al.(1993) point out that during the 1970s the Bank promoted "dirigiste" economic development strategies in the Third World. Allied with this was a promotion by the Bank of strong government. The outcome was,

> *The role attributed to the state...expanded successively... from one of provision of infrastructure, health and education, and rural extension to one of active guidance of all sections of social and economic life. Indeed, the increased role of the state, the increased role of the World Bank and the economic rise of the Third World took on the appearance of inextricability.*
>
> (Gibbon et.al., 1993:2)

and it is worth repeating his concern that the deep underlying assumptions of the Bank's education staff are getting further and further removed from the culture of those who have evolved their ideas through "study and practice of the education process itself" (Lauglo, 1996:5). That education has a role to perform in getting the social and economic reforms Jaycox recommends under way is unarguable. But as the 1995 paper seems to hint and as Morris' analysis clearly indicates, eggs and chickens have to be in the right order.

The perceived **culture of the Bank** is another crucial area of critique. Williams (in Buchert and King, 1995:164) repeats the oft-quoted fear that "ideological inclination has taken precedence over objectivity". Williams goes further in suggesting that the Bank is "rewriting history in its version of events" (in Buchert and King, 1995:164). Conversations with the Bank "insiders" (see 5.2.5. below) are more revealing in this matter of the Bank's perceived culture, but Girdwood (in Buchert and King, 1995) notes that "there are certain institutional constraints and practices which define and shape the way in which World Bank employees as individuals conduct their duties" (page 65). These constraints even go so far as to cause editing of documents from external sources to omit what Girdwood refers to as the "strong health warnings" of the authors (page 66). Even more serious is her statement, backed up through the interviews below, that:

> *the overwhelming impression (of the Bank) is of constant institutional change: change in divisional structures; in divisional policies; in personnel; and in line-management responsibilities. Such constant change would make the formulation of coherent policy hard to achieve. And finally, the constant process of restructuring and re-assigning staff suggest that the Bank as an institution is unlikely to learn from the lessons identified*

during the preparation of the study (on higher education).

(Girdwood, in Buchert and King, 1995:67)

All commentators on the Bank refer to the huge impact of the so-called Wapenhans Report, produced in late 1992. An internally commissioned review of the internal efficiency of Bank projects,(i.e. the extent to which they fulfilled their own targets), Wapenhans delivered a disturbing verdict. Failure rates were as high as 40% in some project sectors. Wapenhans suggested a culture change for the Bank - from one of loan approval as the target to one where results on the ground were seen as the measure of efficiency. The deep basic assumptions of the Bank's staff, whether critiqued from within or without, were seen to be wanting.

The **defining values** of the Bank have been a constant concern of this study and these are again picked up by a variety of critics. George and Sabelli draw attention to the Wapenhans culture change referred to above (George and Sabelli, 1995:226). They also lift the lid a little on values within the Bank at the micro level. Quoting Robert McNamara, a former president of the Bank, internal communication was identified as his most difficult problem at the Bank. A researcher is quoted as stating that "work pressures and a sense of competition .... inhibit communication.. Communication is perceived as a monologue from higher management levels.... Directives are given by senior management without adequate explanation or rationale" (George and Sabelli, 1995:119). Jones (1992) provides useful insights into the defining values of the Bank when he discusses the role of certain powerful individuals in policy formulation. Wadi Haddad's questioning of the Bank's record on curriculum "was an act of conviction and professionalism not always apparent in the Bank " (Jones, 1992:252). Haddad's findings were not published by the Bank for 8 years, largely because they identified major failings

in Bank priorities and policies. It is also significant that Haddad assumed leadership of the Education and Employment Division of the Bank at that date. Much more is said below through the interviews about the defining values of the Bank but any reading of its published output leads the observer to side with Cheryl Payer, writing as long ago as 1982:

> *Capitalist development of the Third World has been ideologically justified by the notion that it would bring a higher development of the productive forces, and immediately or eventually lead to a better life for all, including the poorest. The reality of capitalist development has been very different..*
>
> (Payer, 1982:357)

Issues of **success and failure** have also exercised the critics. The Wapenhans Report has already been referred to and Cheryl Payer's work is a comprehensive and well-argued attack on the capitalist-economics base of the Bank's activities. Edward Jaycox, a Bank Vice-President, goes so far as to quote a Bank specialist who states:

> *We, I think it is fair to say, among all of our achievements, have failed in Africa, along with everybody else. We have not fully understood the problems. We have not identified the priorities. we have not always designed our projects to fit the agro-climatic conditions of Africa and the social, cultural and political frameworks of African countries. This is evidenced by the percentage of poorly performing projects...*
>
> (Jaycox in Commins, 1988:25)

For a Vice-President of the Bank to go so far in print indicates some awareness of the possibility of failure. Yet the Bank literature in general does not reflect this awareness. George and Sabelli (1994) suggest that one of the Bank's major problems is that "the institution and its personnel are never even made to *define*

failure and the steps that might be taken to avoid it, much less take responsibility for it" (page 92). Mobility of staff and a lack of accountability are taken up by many Bank critics. Payer (1982) notes that the project appraisal reports which the Bank produces to evaluate the success or failure of activities are not published. They are also "heavily edited to suppress embarrassing revelations" (Payer, 1982:9). Researchers are able, with some difficulty, to get hold of such documents as these from UN libraries, private sources or even from the Bank on request. However, the main point from the critical literature is that although appraisals and evaluations are to be found, open discussion as the basis for learning from experience does not typify the Bank.

Knowledge and information are particularly important as the Bank prides itself on the quality and quantity of its printed output. Jaycox (in Commins, 1988) notes with some pride the amount of information the Bank makes available to donors, to recipient countries and the public at large. Yet so many commentators, from Williams, cited above, to George and Sabelli, note the selectiveness of Bank information and its apparent subservience to ideological considerations. Lauglo (1996) has commented on the uses to which the Bank puts research and both McGinn (1994) and Samoff (1993) express serious doubts regarding the Bank's use of information. George and Sabelli (1994:197) and Alison Girdwood (1995:49) lay great emphasis on the selectivity of Bank information and the restricted nature of its sources. Only 21% of the background material for the 1994 *Higher Education* paper came from non-Bank sources. Similar statistics can be applied to the other major Bank publications under review. Girdwood also draws attention to the quality of material used by the Bank. She states:

> *Like all such studies, the work by Albrecht and Ziderman was at risk of drawing together material which was well out of date before its*

publication..It can be seen that case studies highlighted as examples of good practice might well already have been discredited by the time....of publication

(Girdwood in Buchert and King, 1995:53)

Girdwood's first-hand account of how a major Bank publication was put together *(Higher Education, The Lessons of Experience*,1994) resulted from a period spent as a researcher at the Bank. Her analysis makes it very clear that the uses and abuses of information, the extent to which external and internal sources are balanced and the ways in which information is integrated into the organization are a serious cause for concern for critics of the Bank. Knowledge is interpreted from the top, secondary sources are commonly used and there is little freedom for Bank staff to act upon the information they generate or receive. George and Sabelli characterise the Bank as a structured and suffocating hothouse where:

Researchers are not free to follow intellectual inspiration. They are under constraints of designated priorities... Further, there is quite a strong hierarchy and the atmosphere is much more deferential than one would find in universities. There is an understandable concern with what superiors will think of conclusions.

(George and Sabelli, 1994:198)

Finding criticisms of the Bank and its functioning as a learning organization is not difficult. Only the tip of an enormous iceberg of critical literature has been examined. Suffice it to say that from the literature, both of the Bank and of the critics, there is little to indicate that the Bank operates as a learning organization in the terms laid down in Chapter Two above.

Turning to "the people as documents", what indications are there from the researcher's informants that the Bank may yet be a learning organization?

CHAPTER SIX: THE WORLD BANK AS A LEARNING ORGANIZATION :WHAT THE PEOPLE SAY

> **Statistics obscure the qualitative dimensions of pattern and.... informants should be viewed not as actors whose behaviour must be measured, but as documents that reflect the culture of which they are the bearers**
>
> (Kluckhohn, in Sherman and Webb, 1980:80)

6.1. Introduction

An important dimension of this study has been the personal interviews with current Bank staff and with critics of the organization, all of which were conducted by telephone. In advance of the telephone conversation, each interviewee was faxed a copy of the interview schedule (to be found as an Annexure to the study). In addition, total confidentiality was assured and in the case of Bank staff, each subject for interview was encouraged to seek approval from his or her line manager for taking part in the research. In the event, interviews were considerably delayed while each of the Bank interviewees attempted to get this approval. In the event, none of the subjects managed to get approval but each decided to go ahead with the interview anyway.

All Bank-employed subjects interviewed were extremely anxious not to be quoted directly. Each was extremely hesitant to speak at all, even when the very general nature of the questions was evident. To use a word like paranoia to describe their reactions to being interviewed would be only a slight exaggeration. This may be attributed to the present defensive climate in the Bank. The bad press it receives in the United States, the world-wide dissatisfaction with its Structural Adjustment Policies and the perception of the Bank as an insensitive

juggernaut crushing all beneath its wheels make it difficult for Bank staff to speak freely about the organization. More to the point, the Bank is 'downsizing' its staff with 600 to 700 jobs disappearing in the past year. Loyalty is apparently a much prized quality among those Bank staffers who retain their jobs.

As far as outsiders were concerned, no such hesitations were evident in their agreeing to share their perceptions of the Bank.

In the earlier discussion of methodology in Chapter Four mention was made of possible advantages and disadvantages of telephone interviews in depth. What surprised the researcher was the extent to which respondents opened up over the telephone once the initial hesitation or resistance were overcome. Sample transcripts are attached as annexures.

6.2. Talking to the insiders

The insider sources are identified as In1, In2 and In3. Each has considerable experience within the education division of the World Bank. All are Education Specialists. Two are male and one female; all have worked at the operational level in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Two are United States citizens, one is British. The researcher has worked with all three at one time or another.

In response to the first question - the **deep basic assumptions** held by Bank education staff, variation in the responses was not marked. In1 suggested that the deep basic assumption shared by Bank colleagues was that education definitely leads to or relates to economic development and hence to improved quality of life. This respondent commented that the idea of education as a basic human right was not as wide-spread in the Bank as the concept of education for economic development. In2 sounded like a standard spokesperson for the Bank; education was about equity and access. It was only one input to the process of

change and development. Empowerment and greater job opportunities were important aspects of education. Within the Bank, capitalism was seen as all good and the public sector was not the only way forward. In3 was much more pungent and controversial. The Bank is here to save the world. It has the answers. This is the backbone of the organizational culture of the Bank. All commentators suggested that the deep basic assumptions were not homogeneous throughout the Bank but that the economic role of education was certainly dominant. There is a common thread running through these answers. Using a hermeneutic approach it is possible to view the answers as consonant with the technicist/economistic bias of the Bank as revealed through the literature reviewed. There seems little doubt that the insiders interviewed saw the deep basic assumptions as fundamentally economic. This raises a dilemma in terms of the learning organization. Dixon (1994) sees continuous transformation as a key factor in developing the learning organization. Yet a long-standing unifying factor in the Bank's culture has been what George and Sabelli (1994) refer to as its unchanging faith or dogma. The question of how important it is to maintain a fundamental vision as opposed to being continuously transformed will be addressed in the next and final chapter of the study.

When asked to comment on the culture of the Bank, the insiders gave quite consistent answers. In1 suggested that the Bank was fairly hierarchical, although it was attempting to open up. Its historical centralization meant that there was a long way to go before the rhetoric fully reflected the behaviour and practice. Over time, the Bank had become more horizontal in its management structure. In2 noted that the organization was extremely hierarchical at the senior levels. Senior managers were "victims as well". At other levels, particularly the operational level, the Bank was very participatory. You could do what you wanted to do with

like-minded colleagues. There appeared to be some confusion at the senior levels regarding the concept of teamwork. A memorandum from the top had recently gone round the organization appealing for more emphasis on teamwork. Yet at many levels staff were functioning very well as teams. Within the Bank there were many different types of team - some designated as such by the nature of their duties, others more loosely aggregated. The fear of "downsizing" played an important part in the organizational culture and associations, networks and linkages were often developed for micro-political purposes. In3 once again had an idiosyncratic view of the culture of the Bank. Its essential competitiveness was stressed by this respondent who also noted that the Bank was both participatory and hierarchical at different levels and in different circumstances. This respondent also commented on the "teamwork" memorandum as redundant as this approach was a feature of much of the work at the operational level. Referring again to Table 2 (Characteristics of Learning Organizations) the insiders' description of the organizational culture of the World Bank seems a long way from that of a true learning organization. The issue of 'constructive conflict' (Morgan, 1986) seems particularly apposite. The evidence from the insiders seems to suggest that this is avoided in the Bank at all costs. The alternative is summed up in the *cri de coeur* of In1 - "They are after me..."

The **defining values** of the Bank were perceived by the insiders as complex. They were undergoing change and showed variation at different levels of the organization. In1 emphasised a greater focus on the qualitative aspects of education and less on the physical and quantitative provision. Renewed attention to the pedagogic aspects of learning, a concern with sustainability and capacity building as well as how to pay for education were all key issues for professionals within the Bank. In2 took a more philosophical line on this question. What can I

contribute with integrity ? What is educationally useful? These are the crucial concerns in terms of values within the Bank. However, at the more practical level In2 suggested that "the documents become all-in-all" within the Bank. There is a climate of reliance on the printed word and "evidence" on paper. As a result, "constituencies" become important. In connection with this, the economists are becoming less influential in the Bank. The social anthropologists, more concerned with the social impact of educational and other change, are becoming more important. Yet those like the respondent who came out of this field, find themselves out of touch with current literature and thinking. In3 distinguished between personal and institutional value systems in responding to the question. Networks and relationships become very important in this area. Very close friendships develop in what is otherwise a very competitive atmosphere. The values of the organization remained technical and practical. Information was widely and freely available. "Can do" approaches were strongly represented. Networks of like-minded people tended to grow up as projects were planned, appraised and delivered. As an overall value system for the organization the notion of finding the answers and applying them, more or less unproblematically, was current. Looking at the characteristics listed in Table 2, much of this material is highly consistent with a learning organization.

The next question addressed to the insiders concerned how successes and failures are dealt with in the Bank. In1, whilst admitting that there were "quite a few" failures in Bank projects, stated that the organization was not geared to dealing with them. Failures were, in effect, not recognized. Projects were merely "restructured". Frequent rotation of staff meant that projects were planned and implemented but the staff responsible moved on rapidly to the next assignment. Accountability was very limited. In3 shared this point of view, initially

responding to the question with, "What do you mean 'failure'?". This respondent emphasised the diffuseness of responsibility within the Bank. Mobility of staff was also discussed. Under these circumstances failure was difficult to recognize or identify. From both these insider sources it was clear that success was a given and that failure was not clearly recognized. In2 on the other hand, took a different view. Although rotation and mobility of staff was an issue the independent internal evaluation capacity of the Bank was an important regulatory mechanism. Accountability and institutional learning were part of a new initiative within the Operations Evaluation Department (OED). This development can be viewed in a number of ways, the most obvious being that the need to evaluate success and failure, the need to encourage all staff to learn from experience and the necessity to disseminate good practice have become more important within the Bank. In2 is a member of staff of OED, therefore promotion of its point of view is not unexpected. In fact, all through the interview process this informant was much more inclined to the "party line" than any of the others, was more conscious of possible offence to authority and took much longer to open up into frankness. The discussion with insiders of issues of success and failure indicated a significant area of mismatch with the indicators of a learning organization. Measures of success seem largely unproblematic and unreflectively arrived at. Were large enough loans disbursed on time, by standard operating procedures and without embezzlement ? Measures of failure seem not to be dealt with at all openly and as sources of wisdom for the future (Morgan, 1986). However, there are signs of change within the Bank as indicated by the staff member of OED. The new President of the Bank has brought in an initiative to promote learning in the organization. Dealing effectively with both success and failure will have to figure in this initiative if the Bank is to learn.

A major part of the interview process was taken up by the issue of **information and knowledge** within the Bank. As the interview schedule shows, five of the nine questions put to respondents were concerned with this area. The answers were rich and interesting. In1 said that within the Bank there was much informal networking through which information and knowledge were generated and distributed. This was not systematic but depended entirely on personal relationships. The mobility within the Bank referred to earlier hindered the maintenance of such networks. Information technology (IT) had proved very helpful in most respects. However, too much information was being thrown at people and the quality of what was so accessible was open to question. In2 thought that IT has helped in the sharing of information but the quantity available was overwhelming. **Interaction** among Bank staff was very good. There was a culture of helpfulness, although some prima donnas existed. Relationships and networks were emphasised by this informant. In3 reflected this in noting that groups and clusters were important in information sharing. This respondent felt that the Bank had a very open information policy where "everything was available". The transparency issue was referred to by In2 who commented on recent guidelines produced by the Bank on the openness and availability of information within the institution.

Good ideas came up from everyone and anyone, according to all three informants. The type of person to get ideas accepted was important, according to In1. Those with broader networks outside the Bank (those "with a life" in the informant's words), those with a thirst for change who had experience in the field were the most likely to have their ideas taken up. In3 noted that mavericks were rare in the organization; they were tolerated rather than encouraged and their ideas were less likely to be taken up. In2 pointed out that it was very

important to market ideas, to push them in the right quarters. Non-pushy types got left behind in the culture of the Bank. Good ideas can also become fashions, adopted regardless of their relevance or direct utility. In3 stated that people with good ideas had to fight their corner, not only for acceptance but also to maintain ownership of their ideas. All respondents commented on the impossible work-load dictated by the weight of information circulating in the organization. **Feedback** was extremely limited. "Brown-bag" (packed-lunch) meetings were common but not always effective. The weight of information available led to overload and hence sloppier thinking. In1 referred to the resulting "sound-bite" answers to complex problems. In3 closed our discussion by groaning, "Meetings, meetings, meetings..."

Sources of information were clearly identified by all three respondents as largely internal. In 1 summarised the situation within the Bank as having too little reflection. Staff tended to produce, review and share their own knowledge. This led to self-delusion: "We have all the answers, we have all the money, we have paid for all the best information". This informant commented that if the Bank had less money available it might have sought information outside its own walls more frequently. In2 suggested that there was far too much information coming from the field. IT was a great help but it was possible to spend 12 hours every day just reading up on information generated within and outside the Bank. In3 was, as usual, more caustic. Information was almost entirely internally developed through the professional networks staff generated.

As far as **integration of knowledge** into the organization was concerned all three informants stated that far too much information was available for full integration into the organization. Networks were useful to condense and digest what was generated but this process tended to downgrade the quality of

knowledge circulating. The overwhelming nature of the information load led to "seat-of-the-pants" decision making as people relied on their own experience and the interpretations of others in dealing with information. However, the relationships, the networks and the contacts with individuals regarded as authoritative rescued most people from the overload they struggled with. This dimension of the discussion led directly into consideration of whether knowledge comes "from the top", is generated individually or collectively. It was clear from all the informants that the clustering of sources and the functioning of networks, usually based on personal relationships, governed the **use and interpretation of knowledge** in the Bank. Of course, broad policy directions were determined by senior management but the working knowledge needed to design, appraise and develop projects came from colleagues within the organization.

Regarding **freedom to act upon information**, to interpret it and apply it, the answers received were revealing. All three informants commented on the strong pressures to conform within the Bank. In2 mentioned the micro and macro-political issues involved in taking too independent a line. In1 confessed that he interpreted the rules freely and was prepared to pay what he thought was an inevitable price - "They are after me", he said. In3 discussed this issue in a similar way, finding it difficult to speculate on how long he could stay in an organization which demanded so much conformity.

From the insider information oulined immediately above come the greatest implications for the Bank as a learning organization. From Table 2 it can be seen that in its generation, circulation and reflection upon information the Bank fails most significantly to operate as a learning organization. Certainly Senge's (1990) idea of governing ideas of purpose, vision and values do seem to be designed into the organization. But the practical problems of information overload, apparent

lack of reflection, the inability to accept legitimate error, the oversimplification of complex problems and the lack of capacity to deal with negative events as sources of wisdom are serious criticisms of the organization in practice.

6.2. *Talking to the outsiders*

The outsiders interviewed for the study were all well known commentators on the Bank, had all carried out Bank-commissioned consultancies or studies and had substantial experience of the workings of the Bank. One was female, the remainder male. All retained professional contacts and even friendships with senior Bank staff yet had the advantage of professional and financial independence from the Bank. Many potential subjects for interview remain dependent to some extent on future Bank commissions and in the process of selecting suitable interviewees this issue had to be addressed. Unlike the insiders, none of the outside subjects had any inhibitions about speaking freely concerning their perceptions of the Bank in operation. The same interview schedule was used with this group as with the insiders yet, because the focus of the questions was so much on the internal workings of the Bank, these respondents were not always able to discuss certain issues as fully as did the insiders. Some restructuring of questions inevitably occurred. For purposes of anonymity subjects are referred to as Out1, Out2 and Out3. A sample outsider transcript is found as an annexure to the study. In addition, a fourth informant was a former Bank staffer, recently retired and referred to in the discussion below as I/O for "insider/outsider".

Starting the discussion with the outsiders' view of the **deep basic assumptions** of the Bank interesting resonances and contrast with the insiders' views were found. Out1 suggested that the deep underlying assumptions of Bank education staff combined high ideals with a rather pedestrian, economistic

ideology. Out2 supported this with mention of a rather contradictory set of beliefs. Whilst the Bank wants to help the poor in developing countries it also has to make a profit. There is a clash between the meeting of loan targets and responding to the real needs of a nation state. Financial issues tend to dominate to the extent that Bank staff tend to ventriloquize the views of recipients to match the Bank's own agenda. Out3 made a very strong statement concerning the role of George Psacharopoulos, the Bank's leading economist of education. This informant referred to the "long shadow" cast by Psacharopoulos in that espousal of his highly instrumental view of education is almost a *sine qua non* for Bank staff. This informant used the term "schizophrenic" to describe the consequences of this influence. Bank staff had high ideals concerning changing the world for the better but at the same time were locked into a positivist/economistic model of how the world works. I/O who had recently retired from the Bank gave a more comprehensive summary, as expected. The Bank could not be seen as homogeneous in this informant's view. A great deal of rethinking was also going on within the Bank with more attention being paid to the social aspects of education. In this informant's words, "yet another" reorganization was currently under way at the Bank; a continuing repercussion from the Wapenhans Report. The metaphor used by this respondent was that the Bank was "doing the splits" - trying to do more with less but maintaining project through-put as the basis for measuring success, or "Brownie points". The Bank staff maintain a strongly neo-positivist approach to their work.

As far as the **organizational culture** of the Bank was concerned I/O stated that the Bank was anarchic yet hierarchical. People within the organization were very status-conscious and there was a definite hierarchy of disciplines with

economics at the apex.The Bank was also highly competitive. There was not a happy working ambience in the place at large. The Bank was also poor at self-reflection, at penetrating its own deep structures. At different levels it was rigid yet flexible. Out1 noted that according to his experience and information the Bank was moving to a culture where global answers were being replaced by a more realistic variety of approaches. Staff within the Bank were more collaborative and the culture of the organization called for more integrative strategies for development. Out2 was less positive about the Bank's culture. It remained locked into standard patterns with ownership of the right answers. The Bank tended to encourage and promote those who conformed and to marginalize those who contested received wisdom. The accountability structure was important with an in-built hierarchy with everyone having to satisfy the line manager above right up to the Board of the Bank. At the same time there was good collaboration among groups of specialists within the Bank. Career competition was always present with a culture of working excessively long hours and demands from the top for people to produce. Out3 found the Bank strongly hierarchical. Continual policy changes and frequent reorganizations contributed to and even maintained hierarchical structures. Within the turbulence of the Bank, clear lines of control tended to be used as lifelines.

The **defining values** of the Bank were perceived in very different ways. I/O saw its financial and professional integrity as a frequently overlooked value. The Bank also exercised great discipline in the sense of rational, sequential and logical approaches to project design. The Bank was transparent and objective in its appointment of consultants and, since the arrival of the new president, Mr. Wolfenson had developed a culture of continuous, permanent learning for individuals within the organization. These opinions contrasted strongly with the

views of the other outsiders. Out2 suggested that a key value within the Bank was a genuine desire to help developing countries among well qualified "development specialists". Unfortunately these people tended to get drawn into a Bank sub-culture of meeting loan targets at all costs. Out1 appeared to support this view stating that a conviction model characterised the Bank. A kind of intellectual arrogance presented the "right" answers. A hard-nosed group of professionals appeared to be concerned with development but returns to investment were actually more important. This led to spurious lending, an experience attested to by Out2 on a recent consultancy to an African country. Parachutism was also identified as a problem with the values of the Bank; zip in, zip out and write the Report in the Sheraton Hotel was seen as too typical of Bank approaches. Out3 confirmed much of this diagnosis in stating that 'power' was the defining value of the Bank staff. However, this informant noted that there were no stronger critics of the Bank than its own staff who were quick to recognize the organization's arrogance. At the same time, Bank staff could not own up to arrogance themselves; they merely observed it in others.

Issues of **success and failure** drew a fairly consistent response from all the outsiders. Out1 suggested that the huge volume of material and information generated by the Bank from its projects was just too overwhelming to be processed properly so lessons could not easily be learned from past experience. The use of well-trodden paths (e.g. cost-benefit analysis) was encouraged and the lack of accountability among highly mobile Bank staff made reflection on success or failure very difficult. Out3 went so far as to suggest that the Bank had a culture of covering up. Restructuring of failing projects was common. The Operations Evaluation Department (OED) was very strong on the mechanics of project implementation. It measured or assessed technical matters like rates of

disbursement of funds or whether correct procurement of materials had been observed. But it had nothing to say about whether children in classrooms were benefiting from the project under evaluation. Out2 stated that where hard figures on such matters as enrolments, numbers of schools built and female attendance were available then success or failure could be discussed within the Bank. However, there was not much deep reflection, more an interest in taking apparently workable strategies from one experience and applying them elsewhere. Greater parental involvement in school financing was a typical case which had now become part of the Bank's orthodoxy. I/O took a broader view of this question. The annual review of Bank projects according to financial and managerial criteria was an important means of assessing success and failure. However, within the Bank's culture there was an unwillingness to downgrade other people's projects so much of the review process might lose impact. This was supported by Out3 who went so far as to suggest that too many Bank staffers were U.S. citizens. Nationals of other countries were dominated by them and as their contracts could be terminated if they rocked the boat too much, such staff tended to keep their own counsel on success and failure. I/O stated that since Wolfenson's arrival at the Bank a new emphasis on organizational learning had arisen. As a result, some departments were spending up to 10% of their budget on training. Generally, the Bank provided huge opportunities for learning, based on the annual appraisal meeting with an individual's line manager. These procedures could however have little to do with assessment of the success or failure of projects at large.

The question of how **knowledge and information** are dealt with in the Bank led to a wide variety of perceptions from the respondents. I/O repeated the views of the insiders in stating that there was far too much information available

within the Bank which it was not always good at sharing. Out3 suggested that the Bank was "knowledge rich but lacked a structure to deal with it". Out2 agreed with this in stating that within the Bank there was collaboration and sharing but outsiders often found it difficult to get hold of important information which in itself was not sensitive. Out3's experience was that a kind of random secrecy operated in that some documents were freely available, others could be photo-copied but not on the premises and some highly sensitive material was left lying around for anyone to see. I/O agreed with this in saying that information in the Bank was open and available but that its actual management of its business was incompetent - payments to consultants were often delayed, for example - so good information was sometimes not made available. Good ideas were thought to come up from all levels, often developed through think-tanks, networks, reading of academic journals and through the work of many bright young people who specialized in teasing out information from dense reports. The culture of the Bank was very creative with bright ideas zipping about the place "like the 4th of July" according to I/O. Out1 suggested that the financial implications of good ideas would create constraints on creativity. Both Out2 and Out3 commented on the strong party line or orthodoxy encouraged by the Bank's culture within which information and knowledge were generated and shared. Good ideas were supposed to come from the top. Out1 noted that where consultants or Bank staff stepped outside these limitations to produce critical yet sound arguments, these frequently remained unpublished or were watered down. Out2 made similar comments. Out1 suggested that 90% of Bank information was internally produced or generated. I/O agreed that this was so with a strong representation of U.S. orthodoxy. Third World sources were usually discounted despite the local inputs usually required for each country's "Education Sector

Review". This document is produced every five years for each country the Bank lends to. In the words of Out2 it becomes the "Bible" relied on not just by the Bank but by other agencies too in the design of their project lending to that country. Out3 went so far as to state that only "tame" consultants were used by the Bank to create the majority of its information base. The use and subsequent interpretation of knowledge raised interesting comments. Despite a wide variety of mechanisms for feedback and consultation, different lenses or prisms were used at different levels according to Out3. These lenses were almost exclusively economic. Despite the strong pressure to orthodoxy from the top there was a good deal of institutional anarchy. Freedom to take action on information was very much an individual issue according to Out2 and I/O. The latter expressed his satisfaction with his own experience in this area but confessed to hearing "horror stories" from colleagues tightly controlled by their line managers. I/O concluded his remarks by reminding the researcher that the Bank remains a basically undemocratic institution. Even its president is unelected; he is nominated to his post by the United States President.

6.3. *Summarising the summary*

6.3.1.Introduction

Addison (1992) describes his own research as "grounded in the everyday practices of individuals in ongoing human affairs". He also uses the term grounded to indicate that the research "seeks to illuminate social, cultural, historical, economic, linguistic and other background aspects that frame and make comprehensible human practices and events"(Addison, 1992:111). The same grounded hermeneutics approach is used in summarising the accounts of insiders and outsiders in this chapter. The research sub-question to be addressed is, "What are the matches and mismatches between the perceptions of the insiders

and the outsiders and what light do their responses shed on the notion of the Bank as a learning organization"? Following the format of Chapter 5 above, responses are categorized according to the broad areas identified in the interview schedule.

6.3.2. Searching for patterns

As far as the **deep shared assumptions** of the Bank staff are concerned, there were similarities and significant differences between the responses of insiders and outsiders. There was strong agreement on positivistic and economistic nature of these assumptions. The power of education to contribute to or even determine economic growth and national development was a given for both insiders and outsiders in assessing the culture of the Bank. However, it was pointed out by a number of respondents that the Bank is not homogeneous. The notion of the Bank's schizophrenia was a powerful metaphor used by three informants, arguing that a desire to change and improve the lot of the world's poor conflicted with the organization's demand for loan throughput. This schizophrenia contrasts strongly with the key concepts of Table 2, especially those dealing with participation, democratisation and information-driven decision making.

The **organizational culture** of the Bank was perceived as heterogeneous. It was certainly hierarchical, particularly at the top levels yet anarchy reigned in the many loose aggregations of Bank staffers who formed their own networks and sets of contacts. Career competition was strong and there was a culture of hard work characterized by very long hours at the desk. A hierarchy of disciplines could also be observed with the economists ruling the roost, at least for the time being. The Bank was perceived by those most knowledgeable as "not a happy place to work". The organizational ambience was not positive. Frequent reorganization and downsizing exercises contributed to this climate. Dixon (1994)

sees an enabling environment and a purposeful social system as key factors in developing learning organizations. Senge (1990) sees all members engaged in developing governing ideas and the integration of thinking and acting at all levels as essential for learning organizations. Mismatches with the reported perceptions are readily identifiable.

The **defining values** identified by respondents presented a fairly consistent pattern. The convictionism (or even arrogance) of the Bank came across strongly from the accounts given. This convictionism was accompanied by some idealism. "We have the answers;we will save the world". However, a genuine desire to do good in the world was to be found among the Bank staff but the "hit and run" style of the organization, its lack of accountability and its competitiveness militated against success. An interesting finding was that there was a strong learning/training tradition in the Bank and the OED was actually reponsible for encouraging "learning within the organization". Discipline within the technical and bureaucratic domain was also revealed as an important value within the organization. Perhaps an apologist for the Bank could argue that the contrast between convictionism and evangelicalism indicates a 'creative tension between vision and current reality' in Senge's (1990) terms.

Dealing with **success and failure** in the organization was perceived by the outsiders in very similar fashion to the perceptions of the insiders. The inability to recognize failure because of the high rates of mobility among Bank staff, the constant reorganizations and a tradition of "restructuring" ongoing projects prevented real assessment of success and failure. Certainly little or no opportunity arose for using failure as a means to learning in the ways suggested by the learning organization literature. The focus of the OED on evaluating the purely bureaucratic aspects of projects did not contribute to realistic handling

of failure. Success was always judged on the basis of "hard" facts and figures like the numbers of schools built, pupils enrolled and so on. Yet these figures were frequently unreliable. A climate of covering up and moving on typified the Bank according to the outside observers. Morgan (1986) is strong on the usefulness of failure and conflict. Legitimate error and uncertainty are potentially positive for the learning organization. Yet the Bank appears to deny they exist. On the other hand, Whiston (1994) notes that task diversification raises performance levels. Here is a justification for staff mobility, interpreted by all informants, insiders, outsiders and those in transition, as a negative feature of the Bank. Mere mobility does not appear to confer a diversity of skills it seems.

The complex issues surrounding **knowledge and information** produced a fairly consistent set of responses from the outsiders. That staff of the Bank are overwhelmed with too much information is well established. Most of this information is internally generated or produced by "tame" experts. At the same time good ideas can be developed anywhere within the Bank although strong party lines are detectable within which such good ideas should be based. There is a very creative environment among younger Bank staff although the unreflective nature of much that is generated leads to suspicions about the quality of the knowledge and information generated. Orthodox thinking from the United States dominates. Information derived from or generated in the Third World is discounted. Outsiders also emphasised the apparent importance of networks and contacts within the Bank which accelerate the free flow of information among staff. At the same time it was noted that communication within the Bank was problematic; there were confused policies on confidentiality and a great deal of variation in levels of control of information. In some sections everything was freely available, in others much tighter control was exerted.

Whiston (1994) emphasises the necessity of effective information absorption. All the evidence from informants suggests that this is an area of great weakness for the Bank. Dixon's (1994) concept of collective interpretation of information also appears to be a casualty of the way the Bank operates.

6.4. Pulling the strands together

The search for patterns and categories is an essential part of this type of research. The researcher must bear in mind the dangers referred to earlier of imposing patterns in the process of hammering out the study. Inexhaustibe interpretability is the other side of this coin. The researcher could go on for ever, seeking new relationships, patterns, codes and categories. But the provisional nature of hermeneutic "findings" removes the necessity for finding answers rather than seeking understanding. The researcher set out to examine the concept of the learning organization as it might apply to the World Bank. In the final chapter which follows, the findings from documentary and human sources are drawn together to produce fusion of horizons. This fusion should be more than a comparison of data with a pre-determined set of criteria or traits. The most interesting part of the final drawing together (in the view of the researcher) may well be the formulation of new interpretations of what may be called a learning organization.

CHAPTER SEVEN: WHEN IS A LEARNING ORGANIZATION NOT A LEARNING ORGANIZATION ?

> 'Then you should say what you mean', the March Hare went on. 'I do', Alice replied;'at least -at least I mean what I say -that's the same thing, you know'.
>
> Alice in Wonderland, Chapter 7.

7.1. Introduction

In attempting to draw conclusions from a study like this it is important first to pose the question of how valid the findings can be. What basis is there, in terms of the methodology discussion in Chapter Four above, for assuming that warrantable knowledge has been achieved ? This is a key question in all qualitative research. In quantitative research a large enough sample, selected by approved criteria allied with respectable statistical techniques often form the basis for reliability, validity or generalizability. Even within this model there is plenty of room for criticism of the validity of the findings. The extent to which the findings of research can be accepted as a fair representation of truth occupies much debate in research quarters. Researchers located towards the qualitative end of the epistemological continuum often dismiss such concerns as positivist reification. However, whether the work measures what it set out to measure is a fundamental question. Of more concern to qualitative researchers is the associated question of whether the method investigated what it was intended to investigate - "the extent to which our observations indeed reflect the phenomena or variables of interest to us" (Pervin, 1984:48). This is more in the way of internal validity than whether the findings can be generalized to natural settings. Ecological validity (Vulliamy et.al.,1990) raises the question of whether the results of research connect with the complexities of the everyday world.

However they may argue against it, qualitative researchers are still wrestling with the heavy inheritance of positivist correspondence theories of validity taken over from psychometric research studies. How to conform to conventional measures of validity whilst maintaining their rich and thick descriptions remains a dilemma for such researchers.

Kvale (1989) discusses the necessity for qualitative researchers to move away from correspondence theories of validity towards an investigative model. He quotes Bernstein (1983) who follows Gadamer and Habermas in arguing for a communal test of validity through the argumentation of the participants in a discourse. To validate is to investigate, continually checking, questioning and theoretically interpreting the findings (Kvale, 1989:77). Validation means continuously to check "credibility, plausibility and trustworthiness" of the actual strategies used for collecting, coding, analyzing and presenting data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:233). Questioning what is being investigated and why is to validate. Finally, validation will lead to a theoretical questioning of the nature of the phenomenon being investigated (Kvale, 1989:82). Kvale states:

> *It is difficult to get out of this validation paradox. An ideal solution would be to conduct investigations so convincingly that appeals to external certification, or official validity stamps of approval, appear superfluous. Ideally, the procedures would be transparent and the results evident, the conclusions of a study intrinsically convincing as true, beautiful and good.*
>
> (Kvale, 1989:90)

It is with these aims in mind - the transparent demonstration of valid and warrantable knowledge - that the concluding sections of this study are drawn together. Their truth, beauty and goodness are open to checking and questioning

by the reader.

7.2. Towards conclusions from the study

The questions to be examined now are what the evidence has shown and whether the Bank can usefully be studied through the lens of the learning organization. Pursuing the hermeneutic approach which has been a mainstay of this study, the evidence will be drawn together through a kind of revisitation of the data. The coding format of Chapters Five and Six will not be followed rigidly but broad general conclusions will be assembled.

Is the Bank a learning organization ? Yes and no is an accurate but unoriginal answer and the concluding sections of this study examine whether the concept of the learning organization advanced earlier has been an adequate one. In fact, to pre-empt the discussion at this point, it will be argued that a richer and more refined theory of the learning organization is required. A grounded theory study will thus attempt to produce theory.

Returning to the question of whether the World Bank is a learning organization it has been seen clearly enough that certain deep basic assumptions are commonly held throughout the Bank and that there is a core of common defining values. These can be summed up as economistic, modernizing and positivist. However, it has also been seen that these values and assumptions have been held relatively unreflectively over a long period of time. There is little evidence to suggest that the Bank has been generative or that it has encouraged new ways of looking at the world. As far as a theory of the learning organization is concerned we begin to detect inadequacies. Strong basic assumptions and defining values are not enough. How does the organization generate new approaches when it is wedded to a predetermined framework ? Comparing the Bank to other organizations - and George and Sabelli (1994) make out a

compelling case for likening it to the Medieval church - it has to be admitted that those organizations which did not adjust or adapt their deep basic assumptions have died out. The church is a good example of an organization which has adapted through upheavals like the Reformation,the Age of Reason, the rise of the Free Churches, Darwinism and scientism, occasional spiritual revivals and such phenomena as the twentieth century's charismatic renewal movement. There is a real difficulty here for the Bank with its strongly positivist, economistic and even naive beliefs and values. Put simply it must be asked, has the Bank changed the world, even in its own terms? We have not seen poor countries transformed; we have seen a small group of countries, located in particular geographic and economic contexts, modernized through huge overseas investments, often buttressed by Bank loans to education. The deep assumptions of the Bank about what changes the world are held sincerely but perhaps unreflectively. A redefinition of the role of beliefs and values is required if the learning organization is to become a useful concept.

How learning organizations deal with success and failure represents another important dimension. It has been shown clearly enough that this is an area of weakness for the Bank. "Cover up and move on" would not be an inappropriate slogan for Bank staff. Learning organizations are reflective, engage in continuous feedback, have systematic procedures for the creation of meaning and share their meaning structures. From the evidence gathered in this study, these qualities are not effectively achieved or even pursued in the Bank. The beliefs/values dimension of an organization is a necessary but not sufficient condition for becoming a learning organization. Appropriate procedures for dealing with success and failure can be judged as both necessary and going some way towards sufficiency.

The same can be said of the knowledge/information dimension. The Bank has this in cornucopian abundance. Yet there are profound problems with the organization's methods of gathering and dealing with it. Friendly sources, tame consultants, sound-bite conclusions and overwhelming volume are characteristic of the Bank's information base. Dixon (1994) emphasises the importance to learning organizations of integrating information into the organization. More importantly, she underlines the necessity to generate and manipulate information through "the transformation of experience". This does not appear to happen in the Bank.

Yet it must be admitted that Bank staff are often its severest critics, that it has a great deal of idealism and that its capacity for training its staff is enormous. It has recently initiated a programme for institutional learning. It has an Operations Evaluation Department. It has increased its information base enormously and is consistent in its policies. There is no doubt that its economic focus has had some positive impact at the macro-level. It is also possible to detect a more human focus in some of its more recent policy pronouncements. As an organization it does want to do good in the world and its procedures are conducted with great integrity. Good ideas abound alongside naive and inappropriate borrowings from preferred sources. Yet the clear message from the data laid out in Chapters Five and Six above is that this is not a learning organization in terms of the analysis of Table 1. Parts of it may be. It may demonstrate some of the characteristics of a learning organization in some of its functions. The question then arises of the adequacy of the model we have of a learning organization.

7.3. Reformulating the concept of the learning organization.

Earlier in this study the researcher noted the temptation to develop a trait

theory of the learning organization. The work of Dixon (1994), already quoted extensively, offers this kind of approach. Whiston (1994) offers a highly technicist, almost cybernetic list of indicators. Many of the key characteristics of learning organizations identified by Dixon are found in this study's analysis. Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993), in their presentation of "total quality management" as a strategy for school improvement, offer a remarkably similar set of traits or characteristics for high-performing management teams. They have a shared sense of purpose and vision, they have open communication, trust and mutuality, useful creative conflict (incidentally, a characteristic missing from most of the learning organization literature), appropriate working methods and appropriate leadership. There is regular review and reflection, individual development is enabled and encouraged and there are sound links with other teams (Murgatroyd and Morgan, 1993:143). Yet there is still something missing from these prescriptions. The question must be asked, would the presence of these characteristics be sufficient **in themselves** to create a learning organization? Or is the sum of the parts greater or less than the whole?

Revisiting the data in the true spirit of hermeneutics we can identify most of these traits or indicators as alive and well and living in the Bank. Listing the positive traits of the Bank in terms of the learning organization gives us such qualities as widely shared values and beliefs, extensive use of information, high degrees of networking and sharing of information, high levels of training within the organization, and integrity in management procedures. More negative aspects of the organization would include its apparent imperviousness to external criticism, its strongly conformist organizational culture, its restricted resource base for information gathering, its narrow economistic focus, its readiness to borrow inappropriate models, its naive positivism and its inability to handle

failure.

It would be possible to reorganize or reinterpret the data to consider what are the core issues in the learning organization and what are the more marginal or peripheral themes. This is undoubtedly helpful in the case of the Bank. Whether it pays its consultants on time is in a sense marginal. What its view is of development is very much a core theme. This last point is in fact the key to whether the Bank, or any organization for that matter, can be classed as a learning organization. The issue of whether an organization of itself has the capacity to learn or whether it is the individual members who do the learning also becomes marginal when the central *raison d'etre* of the organization is in doubt. As far as a business or industry is concerned, this *raison d'etre* is rarely at issue. In Dixon's examples manufacturing companies and transport organizations have no difficulties in deciding why they are in business. The richness of metaphor which Morgan (1986) brings to the discussion of the learning organization gives some indication of the greater challenge to more "human" organizations when determining their reason for being. It must be admitted that the education division of the World Bank appears to have a clear picture of why it is at work in the world. The core mission is self-evident. There is no room for ambiguity. Education is seen as a major contributor to economic development. Its role in social and cultural development is occasionally acknowledged but is definitely marginal to the main concern, summarised neatly in the *Priorities and Strategies* paper as:

Education....is critical for economic growth and reduction of poverty

(World Bank, 1995:17)

One cannot take much exception to a statement of this type but if the term 'critical' is replaced with the word 'solely' then we get closer to the actual

agenda of the Bank. Despite its espousal of the cultural and social dimensions of education in its introduction to the 1995 paper, the Bank devotes only 116 words in this publication to the issue of AIDS and education. It devotes no space at all to following through its slogans on the civic purposes of education or on education as the main instrument for the dissemination of the accomplishments of human civilization. From the data examined in this study there is no doubt at all of the rigidly economistic basis for what the Bank tries to do in education for the developing world. Yet UNESCO's *World Education Report* of 1993 closes with these words:

> *At a time such as the present, when profound changes are occurring in the whole structure of global economic, social and cultural relations, and the role of education in these changes is coming to be recognised as fundamental, all countries can only benefit from knowing more about the* ***cultural premises*** *of each other's education (emphasis added).*
>
> *(UNESCO, 1993:89)*

Even critics within the Bank have recently been raising hard questions about this economism. Stephen Heynemann, in an article entitled, *Economics of education:disappointments and potential*, states:

> *We know very little about the economic effects of educational decisions and, as a result, the sector remains vulnerable*
>
> (Heynemann, 1995:572)

For a leading Bank spokesman to make such a statement is extremely significant. He also goes on in the same article to demand more specification to support such Bank slogans as 'class size makes no difference', 'money makes no difference', 'teachers are conservative and self-interested'. Heynemann suggests that the educational community has a responsibility 'to demand better economic evidence

on a wider variety of educational questions' (Heynemann, 1995:573). Heynemann quotes much more positive and helpful uses of the economics of education which use more creative methodologies.

Two important points have now arisen. Not only can it be shown that the Bank is unduly wedded to an economistic outlook; George and Sabelli (1994) have made this clear as did Cheryl Payer twelve years earlier (Payer,1982). Any number of critics from the left or the right would agree on this. The significant second point is that powerful voices from **within** the Bank - and Heynemann, a former president of the Comparative and International Education Society, qualifies for this description - are raising deep fundamental questions about the basic assumptions on which Bank activities are founded. Learning organizations do things like this. Heynemann is attempting to make sense of the world in which he operates. He is attempting to transform his experience to generate and manipulate information. He is attempting to interpret information that can be collectively acted upon. Other staff within the Bank appear to have the same motivation. The Bank President's push for more emphasis on learning within the organization can be seen as part of the same imperative. Yet an explicit task of this study was to raise the issue of whether the Bank could be made more of a learning organization than it already is. Learning means changes in behaviour which are more or less permanent. At the same time attention has been drawn to over-permanence in Bank values and culture. Is it time to reformulate the concept of the learning organization ? The inadequacy of the prescriptions of Senge, Dixon and others is clear. Deeper theorizing is necessary.

7.4. Completing the hermeneutic circle

The model of the learning organization presented in the literature has weaknesses. A **two-dimensional model** of organizations - they are learning

organizations or they are not according to the criteria adduced- is inadequate. The World Bank has been checked against these and in many cases gets a passing grade. Yet organizations are more sophisticated than this model suggests and the research approach of this study goes beyond mere check-listing. Organizations are **multi-dimensional.** They suffer from ambiguities (March and Olsen,1979); they have an 'aleatory dimension' in Hoyle's (1988) phrase. There is a 'looseness of connections' among them (Scott, 1981). Learning was loosely defined earlier in this study as 'a change in behaviour which is more or less permanent'. As Fullan (1993) indicates, knowing what causes change is not sufficient to bring it about successfully. One has to recognize the unique factors in a situation and prepare for them. Rational planning may not be adequate. Decisions have to be made about whether change is to be incremental or sweeping, based on innovations or more modest improvements. Attempting change armed only with an inadequate theory of the learning organization will prove less than helpful.

7.5. Borrowing metaphors

The metaphor of the learning organization rests upon an analogy with human learning. Therefore, it is to this field that we now turn in attempting to refine theory. Theories of learning and their partner theories in the field of cognition provide a rich source of metaphor. Guilford (1988) has provided one of the more satisfactory models of human cognition. He suggests that there are three 'faces of intellect'. These can be conceived of as processes, contents and products. In other words, how we think, what it is we think about and the outcomes or end results of our thinking combine or interact to produce intelligent behaviour and hence learning. This analysis of what goes on in the mind is more helpful than suggestions that humans sit somewhere on a two-dimensional continuum from

intelligent to stupid. In the same way the learning organization could benefit from a deeper analysis of what goes on within it. Borrowing from Guilford the following processes, content and products might be identified:

- PROCESSES: Reflection, Self-examination, Participation, Continuous Feedback, Constructive conflict etc.
- CONTENT: Networking, Information,Patterned performance
- PRODUCTS: Generative solutions, Making sense of the world, Dealing with failure, Creating spare capacity etc.

Something unsatisfactory with the model begins to make itself apparent. Is this just another list of traits, the great difference being that the **interaction** of these characteristics produces the learning organization we seek ? How can the 'boxes' of Guilford's model be filled in? Will the product of this exercise move the theory of the learning organization on much further? The learning organization is a metaphor. Guilford's model is a metaphor and the best ways in which researchers have attempted to understand human learning is through the use of metaphor. Skinner's black box is now part of the language. Piaget's schemata and the information processing models of Gagne are all analogues of what we believe goes on within the mental processes we refer to as learning or intelligent behaviour. To understand the learning organization better, we need a more effective metaphor.

Sternberg's triarchic theory of intelligence (Sternberg, 1990) emphasises the thinking processes that are common to all people rather than the differences in the content of thinking which Guilford and others focus on. Sternberg identifies **componential** intelligence (thinking), **contextual** intelligence (adaptations to context) and **experiential** intelligence (solving new problems) as the key factors in intellectual functioning (see Woolfolk, 1993: 113-115 for a fuller discussion).

The theory obviously owes much to Guilford and there is a temptation to start filling in boxes again. However, Sternberg's theory has much relevance to an attempt to refine the theory of the learning organization. The three factors identified by Sternberg interact dynamically with one another and obviously lend themselves to a fuller conception of the learning organization. If Guilford's is a filing cabinet model then Sternberg presents us with a 'stock exchange model' where everything is shifting, patterns are laid down and broken up and where activity is the key feature.

Sternberg's theory has important insights for learning organizations. His metacomponents (planning strategies) interact with performance components and knowledge acquisition components to produce what he calls thinking. Applied to the learning organization this analysis would indicate that such organizations are purposeful and reflective in planning what they are to do, executing appropriate strategies and acquiring the knowledge relevant to the tasks to be undertaken. Woolfolk (1993) notes that:

> *Examples of metacomponents are identifying the problem, allocating attention, and monitoring how well a strategy is working. A second function served by components - executing the strategies selected - is handled by performance components. One performance component allows us to perceive and store new information. The third function - gaining new knowledge - is performed by knowledge acquisition components, such as separating relevant from irrelevant information as you try to understand a new concept.*
>
> (Woolfolk, 1993:114)

Woolfolk's discussion goes on to note that some components are very task-specific; others are more general and are required for any cognitive task.

The second part of Sternberg's triarchic theory concerns coping with new experiences. There are echoes of Whiston in his identification of the ability to deal effectively with novel situations - creativity, plus the development of "automaticity", or patterned performance whereby new solutions become routine processes (Whiston, 1994). A fundamental dimension of any learning theory concerns how the organism adapts to or accommodates new information and situations. This becomes a dominant issue for learning organizations which are generative rather than merely adaptive.

Finally, Sternberg highlights the importance of choosing an environment in which people can succeed - by adaptation to that environment or re-shaping it if necessary; in Sternberg's terms this demands selecting, reshaping or maximizing the context. These capacities would be valuable within a learning organization. It has been argued that they are largely missing from the World Bank in operation. Sternberg's conception of what happens when we try to think and act offers a more useful way ahead than the mere listing of desirable traits that this study has already rejected. It is a dynamic model which takes us further in the "process of becoming". From the theory a *learning organization* can be reconceptualized as one which applies appropriate thinking and planning strategies, handles new problems creatively and speedily and adapts to its environment by selecting and reshaping its context. But we are sliding towards a new set of criteria. Organizations are actually more than the sum of their parts or characteristics. Gouldner describes rational system organizations as:

> *...a structure of manipulable parts each of which is separately modifiable...by deliberate decision.*
>
> (Gouldner, in Scott,1981:60)

But the real world is not like this. Organizations are complex and variable.

Concepts like equifinality, multi-headedness, the amorphousness of boundaries, coalitions of individuals and sub-groups are found in them. They are rarely mechanistic and predictable. They are ambiguous in their intentions, their understanding of cause and effect, their reconstruction and recall of history and, most importantly for the learning organization, they are ambiguous in the attention individuals and groups give to contesting demands and decisions (March and Olsen, 1976). It could be argued that this study's analysis of the World Bank has in effect been an investigation of its ambiguities. Thus the theory of the learning organization emerging from the work has taken a metaphor from psychology, found it lacking in plausibility and has extended it by the application of Sternberg's triarchic theory. This in itself is insufficient to improve the quality of the lens referred to as the learning organization. The lens has to be wide-angle rather than tight-focus. Ambiguity theory widens the focus. Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), building on the earlier work of Burns and Stalker (1961), looked at successful organizations in turbulent environments. They tended to be organic rather than mechanistic. Such organizations had more in common with an amoeba than a machine (Morgan, 1986). Lawrence and Lorsch gave

> *precision and refinement to the general idea that certain organizations need to be more organic than others, suggesting that the degree of organicism required varies from one subunit to another.*
>
> (Morgan, 1986:55)

Contingency theory teaches us that in different environmental circumstances some types of organization are better able to survive than others. Space precludes a detailed analysis of the work of Mintzberg on the five species of organization he has identified - the machine bureaucracy, the divisionalized form, the professional bureaucracy, the simple structure and the "adhocracy" (Mintzberg, 1979).

Mintzberg's typology helps us understand why the Bank functions and fails in the way that it does. Mintzberg's first two categories are ineffective where the environment is complex and unstable; the developing world *par excellence*. The professional bureaucracy tends to function best in such organizations as universities and hospitals where the people with key skills are allowed to work fairly autonomously. The Bank would appear to fit into this model; yet its staff cannot be said to work in this way. The simple structure or the adhocracy are inappropriate to the Bank. In short, it does not have a clear model to work to. Contingency and ambiguity rule.

What theory of the learning organization can we work with if useful advice is to be offered to the Bank or any other organization seeking to improve itself?

7.6. Refining the theory of the learning organization

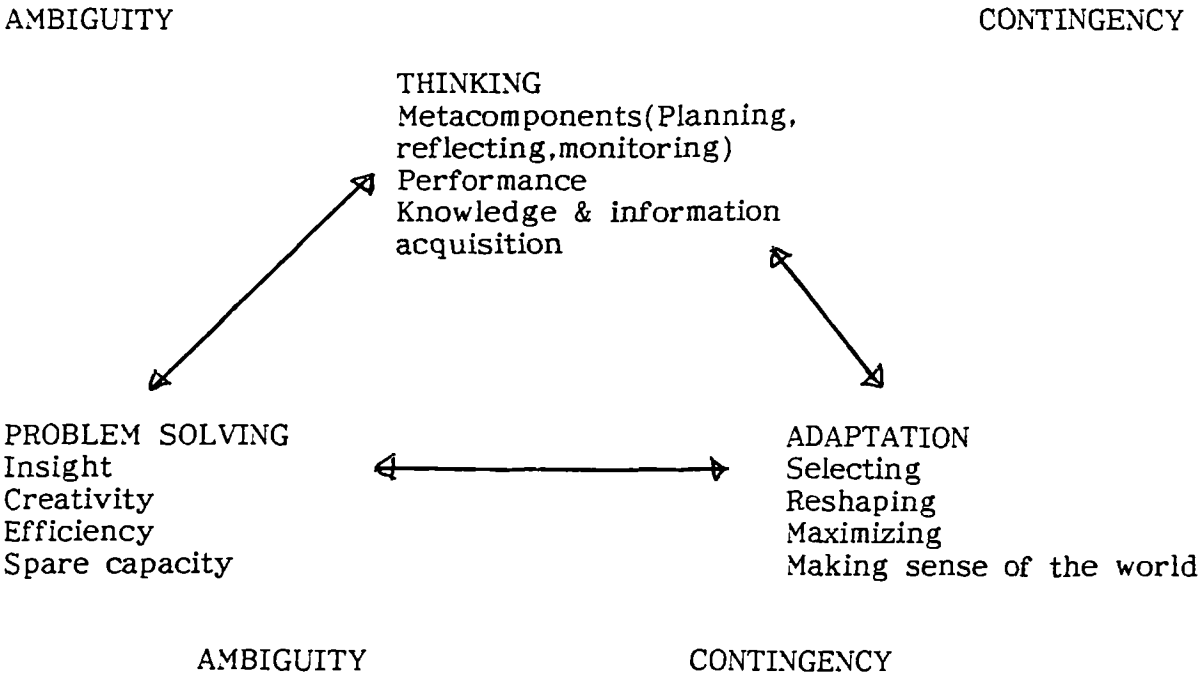
In Sternberg's terms, intelligent behaviour involves thinking, adapting to contexts and solving new problems in a dynamic, interactive model. Fagerlind and Saha (1983:197) present what they call a dialectical model of the relationship between education and development. The terms dynamic and dialectical have application to a refined theory of the learning organization. In escaping from trait theories we are challenged to produce theory which is more organic in nature and which relies less on hard and fast characteristics or dimensions and more on interactive elements. Combining insights from Fagerlind and Saha and from Sternberg the following statement emerges:

Learning organizations think; they adapt themselves; they solve problems.

By thinking we mean they have strategies for planning, for performing and for acquiring knowledge. By adaptation we mean they select their environments, they reshape them where necessary and they maximize the opportunities their contexts offer. Through these dynamic and interactive processes they are able to solve

new problems creatively and efficiently. They become insightful and they develop automaticity. These are more than traits, indicators or characteristics because all these processes are in a dialectical relationship with one another. Furthermore this dialectic is conducted in an environment which is acknowledged to be complex, contingent, ambiguous and even turbulent. Figure 6 below illustrates the relationship between the components of the model and the influence of the ambiguous and contingent environment in which they function. This is an organic model where making sense of the world influences the knowledge and information acquisition processes which in turn are determined by the creativity and efficiency with which knowledge is generated.

Figure 6: The learning organization redefined



The model is dynamic, focusing on activities rather than characteristics. Contrast these dynamic inter-relationships with the analysis of the World Bank presented through the data in Chapters 5 and 6 above. There seems to be little reflection or 'thinking' within the Bank about its shared basic assumptions. The economistic

view of education is a fixed ideology. Success and failure are not adequately analysed and dealt with in terms of evaluating the executing strategies or performance of the Bank. The whole package of problems associated with the Bank's generation, integration and use of knowledge and information has been highlighted. Contextual intelligence is another clear area of failure by the Bank. All environments in Third World education appear to be seen as much the same. This non-differentiation could be seen as 'reshaping the environment' but cannot be interpreted as maximizing of opportunities. Perhaps the Bank's failure is seen most clearly in its inability to solve new problems creatively. The mixture as before, with slight changes of emphasis, is not an unfair judgement on the policies and practices reviewed from 1974 to 1995. Undoubtedly the Bank is efficient in its procedures. It is information rich but cannot learn from experience. Perhaps most disappointingly, in its public pronouncements the Bank fails signally to recognize the complex, ambiguous and contingent world in which it operates.

Examining the World Bank through a lens called the learning organization does not result in all bad news. The Bank is staffed by very capable people. One informant referred to the working environment as "like the 4th of July" with bright ideas and exciting issues bursting forth everywhere. That the hierarchical and conformist culture of the Bank creates a major brake on progress towards becoming more of a learning organization is clear. For the individuals within the organization to learn, and thus for the organization to learn and change, certain conditions have to be met.

7.7. Learning how to learn

Smith (1990) suggests that learning to learn represents an essential skill in today's workplace. This means the fostering of learning which is more efficient,

more effective, more active and more reflective. Fostering more active learning refers to the practice of encouraging personnel at every level of the organization to initiate a greater number of learning efforts on their own. This may entail both officially sanctioned and self-initiated learning activities. More reflective learning entails enhancing the capacity of members of the organization to make sound and imaginative choices about the learning strategies and resources they use and to monitor their effectiveness. To the extent to which people take on these responsibilities they are learning to do what teachers and trainers have traditionally done for them in the past. Enhancing learning competence in this way means not so much teaching people what to do but creating the environment within which they will want to learn for themselves in their own ways. Thus learning organizations are more than organizations which have programmes or strategies for instructing their members. The model of the learning organization advanced above is essentially an action model. It has resonances with some of the characteristics of learning organizations drawn from the literature, especially those of Senge and Morgan. But it focuses on activities rather than traits. The task of the learning organization is to create the environment in which its members can think, adapt and problem-solve in the dynamic way the model suggests. The present structure of the Bank and its culture clearly prevent this from happening. If we turn to the World Bank again and apply the model to its activities in, say, developing a project for or with a developing country we would see Bank staff thinking, planning and acquiring knowledge and information which would lead them to select and maximize the appropriate environment for their intervention. They would actively try to make sense of the contextual world in which they are operating. Insight and creativity would characterise the solutions brought forward. Project components would be implemented efficiently. Reflective

monitoring would typify the performance of the project tasks. Spare capacity would enable staff to cope with contingencies and ambiguities. Evaluation of the project components would identify areas of success and areas of failure such that the organization and its members would learn from experience. All this can sound as mechanistic as it would be to follow a set of traits or blindly to attempt to impose Dixon's organizational learning cycle on a business or other enterprise. The message of activity is insufficient in itself. If this study has shown the writer anything it has shown that there are no formulae or guaranteed guidelines for the development of a learning organization. There are helpful metaphors, whether they be filing cabinets, stock exchanges, brains or psychic prisons. But there has to be something more.

Fundamental to any organization is some understanding of 'the point of it all'. Perhaps this is what is wrong with the World Bank. Some people within it are very clear about what the point of it is - but they are wrong. Others are unclear about the point of it - and they may be closer to the truth. It was stated earlier that widely held deep, basic assumptions are not enough. Charles Handy (1994:239) suggests:

> *To find (the) point, that reason for our doing and our being, it helps to build on three senses - a sense of continuity, a sense of connection and a sense of direction.*

He goes on to say that without these three senses we can, in a world of change and confusion, feel 'disoriented, adrift and rudderless'. Learning organizations can adopt characteristics or traits. They may even adopt a dialectical action model as proposed above. But without the sharing of the three senses identified by Handy they are unlikely to discover and utilize the models 'more congruent with human nature' which Senge (1990) identifies and which lie at the heart of

the true learning organization. The identification of these three senses brings us full circle. A continuing problem in this study's discussion of the learning organization has been that of the deep basic assumptions or defining values of the learning organization. Table 1 in Chapter Two listed the characteristics of learning organizations largely in terms of defining values and these ideas were certainly found in both the interview schedule and in the analysis of documentation. But values do not exist in a vacuum. Handy's assertion gives the values dimension a firm location. It is not sufficient for an organization to have deep basic assumptions which are held by all members consensually. Deep basic assumptions which encapsulate 'the point of it all' for an organization must be framed within the terms Handy proposes. They must demonstrate a continuity, to be seen to have evolved and to be evolving. They must demonstrate their connection to both the real world and the world hoped for, the 'vision' mentioned by Senge. The deep basic assumptions must demonstrate a sense of direction, a notion of where the organization wants to go and what it wants to become. The action model developed from Sternberg (Figure 6) illustrates a learning organization which may think, adapt and problem-solve in a context of ambiguity and contingency. It will truly operate as a learning organization only insofar as it incorporates the senses of continuity, connection and direction which identify the core values essential to its growth and development.

7.8. Postscript

The concluding sections of this study have presented a first approximation of a refined theory of the learning organization. This refining is based on data gathered from the World Bank through the processes described in Chapters Five and Six. Revisiting the data, how can the model proposed be made more explicit and user-friendly ?

A key concern of the latter part of this work has been to escape from trait theories. Such theories may encourage the view that if the characteristics are observable then the desired state of affairs - the *learning organization* - has been achieved. But it has been shown that the whole is more than the sum of the parts and it is more fruitful to consider what activities learning organizations need to engage in and, more importantly, how these activities interact with one another and with an ambiguous and contingent environment. It was noted earlier that learning organizations think, adapt and solve problems. They reflect, plan,perform, monitor and acquire knowledge. They select their environments to maximise their opportunities and they attempt to make sense of the world. They solve problems in a creative, efficient and insightful way using the spare capacity they have created. All these activities are in a dialectical relationship, deeply interactive and inseparable. If the data gathered on the World Bank in this study is revisited, how could the Bank's activities be refocused to bring about a learning organization ?

From the interview evidence gathered it is clear that the planning, reflecting and monitoring activities of the Bank are deeply flawed. The mobility of staff was commented on by all interview subjects. The confused notion of teamwork in an unsystematic culture of 'doing what you want' also came through clearly from the insiders. On the other hand, hierarchical systems of review and control were identified as problematic by Bank observers, within and outside the organization. The acquisition and use of knowledge stand out as major areas of difficulty for the Bank. The overwhelming scale of the information made available and its restricted sources make it difficult for the organization to 'think' effectively or creatively. The culture of the Bank will have to change from a 'Brownie points' system based on the number and dollar value of projects pushed

up to the Board to one where planning, reflection and monitoring over medium to long-term periods are the norm. Those who plan must be the reflectors. Those who monitor must acquire and supply information. Methods of filtering, condensing and presenting information in a manageable style must be developed. Neo-positivism will be found inadequate when the context of educational project work is examined more closely by planners, reflectors, monitors and information generators. The adaptation of the organization to the realities of the various environments within which it works is part of the cultural change process needed. Too many informants and Bank documents reflected a 'Washington eye' view of the world. The formulaic style of much Bank project work reveals this inability to solve problems creatively. Efficiency is largely seen by the Bank in terms of effective internal procedures for financial disbursements and protection from embezzlement by recipient governments. One subject commented on the difficulty most organizations have with the deep structural examination which is necessary for fundamental changes of values and attitudes. The Bank is particularly prone to this despite its frequent reorganizations. It would be a counsel of despair to say that the Bank will always operate like a bank. Another informant noted that the staff of the Bank is made up of many well-intentioned, professionally very capable, competent and experienced educators -" gifted people, committed people". The problem lies then not with the organization's members but with 'the point of it all'. The shift from a loan-disbursing organization to one more congruent with human nature is perhaps at the heart of the new Bank President's radical reappraisal of how the Bank functions. His task is to lead the Bank into Senge's fifth discipline. If a more dialectical model of what is to be done and how it is to be accomplished can be adopted then the Bank can change, learn and grow. It may be overoptimistic to suggest that the

Bank can achieve continuity, connection and direction in Handy's terms. It will certainly have huge problems in getting to this state of being. The key problem areas for the Bank to overcome are its apparent inability to deal with ambiguity and contingency, its reliance on what Weiss calls accretion, or the repetition of 'proven' strategies. Secondly, the Bank will have to deal with the problem of information and knowledge, both in terms of the volume of material its staff is subjected to and the quality of information culled from friendly sources. Thirdly it will have to look closely into its role as an organization dealing with a deeply human activity, the transmission of culture rather than the marketing of a commodity called schooling. The Bank will have to make better sense of the world than it manages at the moment. A huge culture change will require Bank staff to develop the insight and creativity which seems so lacking in its current operations. Despite lip-service to participation in so much Bank literature, it is the voice of Washington which tends to dominate educational debate.

Whether the model of the learning organization advanced in this study is adopted or not, the outlook for the Bank is not optimistic. It is a juggernaut, hugely powerful and accountable to nobody except in the narrowest financial sense. Whilst the values and assumptions concerning the point of its operations remain positivist, capitalist and largely unreflective it cannot learn. Maybe the new Bank president will make a difference.Certainly Senge would see leadership as a key factor in achieving the learning organization. But it is feared that the culture change required in such an organization is too great for any individual or group to achieve.

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Annexure 2: The World Bank and its Education Projects

Well over 90% of IBRD/IDA loans and credits are made through specific projects. Each project is developed through what the Bank calls a "project cycle", a six stage process. First, the Bank **identifies** suitable projects which fit in with national and sectoral development strategies and which are thought by the Bank to be feasible. Projects are then incorporated into the Bank's lending programme for a given country. Next, a **preparation** phase is entered into. The Bank plays a major role in project preparation, no longer leaving it to recipient countries to prepare their own documentation. Using both its own staff and hired consultants, Country Surveys are prepared. Through this means, the Bank maintains its hegemony, using its strength to prepare economic and social intelligence in a more comprehensive way than most governments can. Such Bank-developed information is usually highly secret, highly technical and inevitably ideologically biased. As Payer puts it:

> *Even if we assume that the information contained in the Country Surveys is accurate, it is clear that the issuing of these surveys, and their use as guides to project identification is a powerful means by which the Bank can impose the priorities desired by its capital-supplying members.*
>
> (Payer, 1982:74)

The preparation phase is usually then orchestrated by the Bank prior to an **appraisal** phase. Appraisal is carried out by Bank staff from Washington who usually remain in-country for three to five weeks fine tuning project proposals. On returning to Washington, the Bank team prepares its report which is used as the basis for continued negotiations between the Bank and the recipient country. Cost-benefit analysis plays an important role in the Bank's appraisal of the

viability of the project under discussion. Hough (1994) has prepared for Britain's Overseas Development Administration a comprehensive critique of this technique. In later discussion, the Bank's adherence to a much criticized social appraisal technique is explored more fully. Suffice it to say at this point that there are profound problems with social cost-benefit analysis as a means of project assessment yet the Bank appears not to have learned from the literature which is critical of this approach.

Three additional phases of a Bank project must be explored briefly. After the appraisal noted above, a **negotiation** phase is entered into. It is at this stage that the Bank's "conditionalities" for any given project are discussed. Typically, as loan documents are completed and formal approval sought from the Bank for release of the loan a number of conditions may be specified for the recipient government. Such matters as matching or partially-matching funding, co-operation with other donor agencies, release of local staff and resources will be negotiated at this stage. Of the $8396 million devoted to educational projects supported by the Bank in the early 1990s, $3901 million came from Bank credits or loans. The larger proportion came from the 'recipient' governments (Jones, 1991:xv). Perhaps most important of all, the objectives and targets for the project will be agreed, many of which will be pre-requisites for continued disbursement of funds. Payer (1982:83) points out that these negotiations may be very one-sided. The Bank argues powerfully. Recipients may want to ensure smooth negotiations, avoiding any boat-rocking. As Rotberg (1981) puts it, the Bank has a multi-national staff and bright young officials of recipient governments may see opportunities for recognition by the Bank and subsequent employment in Washington. Although Rotberg is coy about this, there is no doubting what he means.

Once negotiations are completed the **implementation and supervision** phases of the project can begin. Basically, the recipient government implements the

project, often seconding its own officials to a "Project Implementation Unit". The Bank's role is to supervise and monitor the project from Washington. The annual reviews of projects are designed to help the Bank review its policies and improve its performance. Critics of the process point out that short-term visitations by Washington-based staff may not necessarily bring about the results desired.

Review and monitoring of projects are separate activities from the more formal and independent **evaluation** phase of the Bank's project lending process. The Bank's Operations Evaluation Department undertakes the 'independent' evaluation by first preparing an audit of the project completion report. Evidence suggests that this form of evaluation leaves something to be desired. The reports of the Operations Evaluation Department normally record a 90% success rate with Bank projects. Focus is usually on whether project objectives were achieved. There is little consideration of whether the objectives were appropriate to begin with. Another recurring theme in analysing Bank performance is to ask the classical management question, "They have cleared the jungle very effectively - but was it the right jungle?"

This brief review of how Bank projects are conducted provides the background topography for the study's analysis of the Bank in operation (Chapter 3). In sum, it can be said that a rational and systematic approach is taken to project lending by the Bank. It should also be noted that the key terms in early Bank policy statements regarding educational lending were:

- lending for **specific** projects
- projects designed to meet the **priority needs** of recipients
- projects designed to be the most **useful and urgent for increasing the productive resources of members**
- **safeguards to avoid economically or technically unsound projects.**

Annexure 3: Semi-structured interview schedule

Dr.....
World Bank,
Washington

Fax No. 00 1 202 676 0319

April 18th, 1996

Research Project: The Organizational Culture of the World Bank

I am engaged in a private research project on organizational culture. I should like to use the Bank as an organization for examination, concentrating on the division which deals with international education.

Within the next few days I should like to phone you to discuss the questions below. They are quite general but may be expanded when I telephone you. Your answers will not be attributed and the enquiry is for academic purposes only. Please feel free to discuss the questions with your line manager to ensure that no breach of Bank confidentiality is at risk.

I would be grateful if you could fax or e-mail me suggesting a time when you would be available to talk on the telephone. The following time slots would suit me best - Monday or Tuesday 22/23 April or the following week, 29/30 April at any time after 8.00a.m. Washington time. I estimate that we would need about thirty to forty minutes to explore the questions. I hope you will feel able to help me with this research which is for my doctoral dissertation.

The Research Questions

1. If organizational culture means the deep basic assumptions and beliefs shared by the organization's members, what would you say these are in the Bank ?

2. How would you describe the culture of the Bank ? Which of the terms below best describe it - participatory, rigid, hierarchical, open, competitive - other terms which occur to you ?

3. What would you say are the defining values of the Bank - the ideas generally thought most important among your colleagues ?

4. How are successes and failures dealt with in the Bank ? What mechanisms are there for learning from the past ?

5. Knowledge and information seem to be important issues in successful organizations. What is your experience of the Bank in terms of:
   - development and sharing of information
   - openness and availability of information
   - levels of interaction among Bank staff

- where good ideas emanate from in the Bank
- how feedback mechanisms operate in the Bank ?

6. How is information generated in the Bank - mainly externally, mainly internally or a balance from both sources ?

7. How is information integrated into the organization - how do you obtain information relevant to your work ?

8. How is knowledge interpreted and used in the organization - is this done 'from the top', individually or collectively ?

9. How free are you to take action on your own interpetation of information ?

Thank you for agreeing to look at these questions. I look forward to speaking to you soon.

All good wishes,

Bob Smith
University of Bristol.

e-mail address bob.smith@bristol.ac.uk
fax :00 44 117 929 1941

Annexure 4: A Bank Project which failed

The Project described is drawn from the Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago's Third Education Project. A similar case study might have been selected from Pakistan, the Fourth Education Project from 1979 and its subsequent incarnations in that country.

London (1993) in the article attached, draws attention to the following causes of project failure:

- lack of research into why projects succeed or fail
- project implementation more complex and subtle than anticipated
- failure to learn from past experience
- lack of correspondence between plan and project outcomes
- mismatch between rationalistic planning and actual contexts
- practical, personnel and financial problems.

London identifies "insuffient regard for congruence between plan and social reality" as the main cause of failure.

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WHY EDUCATION PROJECTS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES FAIL: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract — Many of the large scale educational development projects in the Third World have been attended by 'success stories' upon their conclusion. Some projects, less publicized, have, however, met with failure in the sense that planned objectives were not met. The present study identifies one of these failed projects, Trinidad and Tobago's Third Education Project, analyzes the proolems encountered, and offers a framework within which the project might have been successfully implemented. The study reveals that it is not so much in the implementation of the project but in the plan and the paradigm used, where the main causes of failure resided. The findings suggest therefore that as a way of ensuring success in project outcome, the plan upon which the project is based ought to be given careful attention during the initial stages of project conceptualization.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years the project approach has increasingly been used as a major vehicle for initiating education innovation in developing societies. Very often projects have been initiated to implement specific features of education stipulated in existing strategic development plans. In the case of a given Five Year Education Plan a single project (school construction, for example) may be mounted to achieve a specific planning objective (curriculum vocationalization, for example). Other major projects may result from the same plan, but availability of funds is always a prime consideration in the decision to extract and initiate projects. Where funding is not available plans may remain inert for a long time, and sometimes may never be implemented. Because of the fiscal problems which developing countries often face, most of their major education projects extracted from long-term education plans have had to await funding either in part or in whole by international lending agencies such as the World Bank.

The major education projects that have been undertaken in the Third World in recent years have had a mixed history, particularly as far as delivery of planned services is concerned. If attainment of stated objectives is used as a performance benchmark, some recent education projects may be characterized as 'successful'; others have been proven to be only partially successful in the sense that implementational objectives were achieved in certain areas but not in others; yet some other projects may be described as 'failures' in which case objectives as planned were not achieved (Psacharopoulos, 1989).

In an analysis of the educational planning process in parts of Latin America, McGinn *et al.* (1979) refer to the 'mounting evidences' of the failure of major education projects in less developed countries. Even more disappointing is the remark that reasons for these failures have not yet been adequately researched, so that causes may be identified and remedial strategies proposed as a course for future action. 'There is little or no analysis of what has been previously tried and . . . failed, and efforts to collect information about obstacles to implementation are markedly limited' (McGinn *et al.*, 1979).

Whatever the status (success, partial success or failure) Williams' (1975) argument is that the educational project implementation process is both complex and subtle. Because of the paucity of knowledge about project implementation, 'one hardly knows where to begin' any meaningful analysis of the impact of the implementational exercise (Williams, 1975). This is the case in spite of the large

number of education projects undertaken in developing nations, particularly following the decolonization era beginning in the late 1950s and gaining momentum in immediately succeeding years.

Admittedly, a certain amount of corporate technical knowledge about these projects would inhere from one undertaking the next, but as the experience of the British Overseas Development Administration reveals, failure of education projects may still continue. This is how Iredale puts it:

> . . . continuity does not in itself ensure that mistakes made are not repeated. Ministers come and go, and the inevitable musical chairs routine that is central to all civil service structures means that the managers responsible for country programmes are moved at regular 3–4 yearly intervals, as are their junior staff.
>
> (1990, p. 163)

Thus, in spite of past experiences subsequent project failure in the same educational environment may occur for a variety of reasons and, depending upon the definition used, project outcome may be interpreted differently depending upon the objective of the evaluator.

In the present paper 'success' or 'failure' is measured against two main indices. In the first place it is seen as a quantifiable element, measured in terms of the extent to which measurable, technically stated project objectives have been met. In the second place success or failure may be client-related. That is, in spite of what may have been achieved, a project has failed or succeeded if the client so deems it. These two approaches have been adopted in the present article.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES DATA AND METHOD

In the desire to achieve greater efficiency in undertaking education projects it is instructive to look back at past performances, with a view to improving the quality of future implementational strategies. This approach has been recommended by Iredale who warns that:

> . . . if we forget the need to go on learning from our experience we do so at our peril. Our evaluation reports (of education projects in the Third World) show many successes. But they include some self flagellation too, and we are constantly conscious of the need to take account of past experiences in the formulation of new work.
>
> (1990, p. 168)

In the present article a past project is therefore examined in the hope that some lessons might be learned as regards implementation of future education projects in developing societies in particular.

The country in respect of which the project is examined is the twin-island state of Trinidad and Tobago in the south-eastern Caribbean, and the project under scrutiny is referred to as Trinidad and Tobago's Third Education Project (1979–1985). This project has been deemed by the client, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, to have failed for the reason that the project's primary objective, provision of a total of about 13,500 school places, was never achieved.

The main objective of the article is two-fold: it isolates some of the problems which contributed to failure of the Third Education Project on the one hand, and on the other it suggests an approach to planning which might be used to cushion or avert similar problems which may contribute to project failure. The planning framework which the article suggests, therefore offers greater possibilities for project success under similar implementational circumstances, and is in response to the view that the planner who is disenchanted with the results of his or her plans ought to 'look elsewhere for solutions that are workable' (McGinn *et al.*, 1979).

Data for this resarch were gleaned from three major sources: government files and progress reports dealing with the Third Education Project; World Bank documents on the project, but in particular the *Loan Agreement*, the *Staff Appraisal Report* and the *Project Working Papers*; and commentaries on the theory and practice of education planning. The paper is presented in the form of a case study, and its findings are believed to have significance for the planning and implementation of education projects in some other settings besides Trinidad and Tobago, but particularly in Third World societies.

The rest of the article is divided into several parts. In the next section an analytical framework for investigating the causes of project failure is presented, followed by an overview of the educational development 'climate' in which the project was struck. Significant highlights of large scale education development projects in Trinidad and Tobago are then given, as a way of relating the Third

oject to predecessor educational initiatives. e objectives of the Third Education Project, investigation of what went wrong and the sons for difficulties experienced are then estigated. Lastly, an attempt is made to ıte project failure to the models of planning sented earlier in the paper. The article cludes with an optimistic note: project ıre can be minimized through application appropriate models during the planning ess.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

orrea *et al.* (1986) argue that there exists a tional relationship between project out- e and 'conceptualization of the planning ess itself'. Correspondence between plan project outcome is also highlighted by inn *et al.* (1979) who assert that 'the el of planning employed' has a direct ection with project performance. If this onship holds true then examination of the ing process upon which Trinidad and go's Third Education Project was based be insightful.

o intellectual traditions are offered from educational planning may proceed. , according to Adams (1991), may be of the rational or interactive (transac-) type, and within these two domains l derivative models may be found. The al approach 'includes all models which he planning process as basically sequen- bservable and capable of being evaluated. ctive models, on the other hand, reflect nphasis on the human dynamics of n making' (Adams, 1991).

/brooke and Lindblom (1970) further e that rational models assume agree- n goals, and reflect 'a faith' in available ques or technology to translate targets ogrammes of action. With rational plans ientation is therefore expected to pro- s the plan directs'. In interactive models other hand faith in the technology used imized, and implementation assumes and uncertainty which are dealt with in e as the plan unfolds. Plausibility of the ive model is therefore demonstrated in bility to resolve problems 'that typically succumb to the demands of objectivity ntification' (Adams, 1991).

nly the *model qua model*, but the social paradigm from which each model emerges is also significant. In the final analysis it is the paradigmatic 'logic' which determines the 'rules of the game' in implementation, and although the social paradigm may not be readily apparent, it is this feature that comprises the important element which imparts meaning and direction to the implementation task. Popkewitz (1984) notes, for example, that it is through the social paradigm that the educational planner or project manager is guided into an understanding of 'what constitutes fact *par excellence* and how people make sense out of the disparate events of their social world'.

Using a continuum of educational planning suggested by Adams (1987), we may identify two social paradigms corresponding with the rational and interactive intellectual traditions of educational planning. Rational planning models are said to be cast within an objective social paradigm, whereas interactive models conform to the subjective type. The rationalistic model 'incorporates positivistic assumptions of a value-free social and physical science, in which the scientist is outside the orderly world being examined' (Adams, 1991). In interactive models by contrast, 'the subjective paradigm has, at its core, the notion that individuals create the world in which they live, and that any understanding of society, its institutions and its emergent social processes, depends on the vantage point of the participant' (Adams, 1991).

In further contrast Morgan explains that the subjective paradigm 'is based on the assumption that society has a systematic character oriented to produce an ordered and regulated state of affairs. The ontological assumptions encourage a belief in the possibility of an objective and value-free social science in which the scientist is distanced from the scene' (1980). The objective paradigm on the other hand:

> overlooks the critical role of human actors pursuing personal and collective goals. It assumes shared goals and ideologies where in fact there is conflict, and it expects change to result automatically on presentation of a technically excellent proposal.
>
> (McGinn *et al.*, 1979, p. 220)

This is the reason that many rationalist plans based upon an objective paradigm 'end up gathering dust' (McGinn *et al.*, 1979).

Lastly, commentators argue that most

educational plans are never wholly rational or wholly interactivist (Carlson and Awkerman, 1991). In any given rationalist plan there are often elements of the interactivist mode, and vice versa. In many rationalist plans for example can be found dimensions of subjectivity just as features of objectivity may be found in many plans based on an interactivist model.

THE EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SETTING

Trinidad and Tobago operates a system of education that is state run and centrally controlled. When political independence was gained in 1962 access to secondary education was limited, about 35% participation, while participation at the primary level was about 80%. It is this contrast which provided the major rationale for the course which future developments in education should follow. Large scale post-colonial education projects were therefore focused on expansion at the secondary level. Primary school expansion was held in abeyance in the interim.

When the above Third Education Project was conceived around 1979, there were 91 secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago providing instruction for about 91,000 students altogether. The norm for secondary education was and still is five years. Participation rate at the secondary level had by then (1979) risen to about 75% (from about 35% at the beginning of the 1960s), but this increase was achieved at great expense to the quality of educational inputs at the primary level. One result was that in the intervening years the primary school plant had deteriorated tremendously. In addition, there was severe over-crowding in many schools caused by natural increase in the population and by internal migration. 'Dangerous to life and limb' was the expression used by a World Bank team to describe most of the primary school buildings then in existence in Trinidad and Tobago (World Bank, 1979b).

Under these circumstances provision of facilities for primary education 'came of age'. A previous human rights recommendation to provide a safe learning environment for children, together with the goal of curriculum reform as an aid to economic development was the major factor that underpinned the new focus on primary education. Rebuilding of dilapidated schoolhouses, therefore, and not the establishment of new schools comprised the new thrust. Irreparable primary school buildings were not merely to be replaced, but certain modern facilities such as library, health/dental room, Principal's office, staff room, a multi-purpose area where school meals could be served, and facilities for the teaching and learning of science and the creative arts were also planned. That is to say, modernization of the primary sector was a major goal.

Because of the government's commitment to the idea of development of education for economic growth and transformation, the above efforts at secondary education expansion did not cease, however. The expansion ethos came to embrace not only the establishment of new schools, but also extension of some secondary schools that had only recently been built. These two lines of action, establishment of new schools and extension of others, were pursued around the 1980s and were included as objectives in the Third Education Project.

This therefore is the educational development setting in which the Third Education Project was conceived. Construction of primary schools was of pivotal importance, but construction and extension of a few secondary schools were also to be undertaken. Technical assistance was also to be provided to assist development of indigenous skills, and curriculum reform was emphasized through proposals to include two Teacher Development Centres in the construction exercises.

LARGE SCALE SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Prior to political independence large scale school building projects were unknown in Trinidad and Tobago, a feature also uncommon throughout the Caribbean and the rest of the developing world. Ascent to national sovereignty changed that picture, however. This is how Trinidad and Tobago's first post-colonial education plan, otherwise known as the *Draft Education Plan* explains the need for change:

> What are we educating for? We are supposed to produce citizens who are intellectually, morally and

emotionally fitted to respond adequately and productively to the varied challenges of life in a small multiracial developing country and to the changes which are being brought about rapidly in the economic foundations of civilization, particularly the challenges of Science and Technology. And we are supposed to anticipate and cater for such inevitable situations such as the disappearance of the totally unskilled labourer the rapid increase in the body of highly specialised knowledge upon which the world society progresses (in other words the barest educational demands of effective citizenship will be increasing rapidly as well), and the rapid increase in population which will mean . . . a greater degree of urbanization of life in the country.

(Ministry of Education, 1968, p. 5)

This therefore is the policy decision which arked commencement of large scale educaon projects in Trinidad and Tobago, and sociated with this new beginning was tablishment of the nation's Educational anning Division within the Ministry of ducation. Prior to the Third Education oject there were three large scale school nstruction endeavours. Two of these, the rst and Second Education Projects were nded by the World Bank; the third, officially ferred to as the Short Term School Building oject, was wholly financed by the government. The Third Education Project mentioned ove was therefore the fourth in a series of ge scale projects, but derives its name from e fact that it was the third local education tiative to be funded by the World Bank. A th project, financed by the Inter-American velopment Bank (I.A.D.B.) is now being plemented.

e First and Second Education Projects

The first and second projects (1969–1978) phasized construction of secondary schools a way of increasing secondary enrolment, Trinidad and Tobago's two technical titutes were also built under these two velopment efforts. Construction of two chers' colleges were also peripheral but ortant undertakings. Under these First and ond Education Projects a total of about 18 ior secondary schools were built with an olment capacity of about 30,000. The dels upon which planning of the First and ondary Education Projects was based were the technical–rational, objective type. ject success or failure was to be seen in ntitative terms, measured by the extent to ch technically stated and quantifiable ctives were met. There was faith in the technology available to translate plan into action, and to achieve project success. Disappointments and failure in project outcome were not anticipated in accordance with the social paradigm used in the planning process. Conflict, contradiction and uncertainty were not expected because of 'tight' and 'logical' planning.

The planning model used was considered appropriate, and the two initiatives proceeded 'as the plant directed'. Both endeavours have been 'success stories' in the history of large scale education projects in Trinidad and Tobago. A World Bank audit report on these two projects explains that:

> A major part of the success was due to the realistic nature of the objectives, the careful preparation of the plan on which they were based, and the government's commitment to the type of development supported by the projects. The school places provided were fully utilized, and the planned diversification of curricula implemented. The few problems which arose in regard to procurement of furniture and equipment are fairly representative of the experience of first education projects in other countries.
>
> (1979a, p. 14)

The Short Term School Building Project

This project was funded wholly by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and was made possible by the windfall in oil revenues received when the price of petroleum, Trinidad and Tobago's premier resource, quadrupled during the mid-1970s. The major objective of the Short Term School Building Project was expansion of secondary places through construction of 36 schools. Between 1977 when the project started and 1987 when it was concluded about 35,000 new secondary school places were provided. The planning model upon which the project was based was of the rational, objective type, very similar to that which was used previously in the First and Second Education Projects.

However, the Short Term School Building Project did not owe its success to the planning model used. At the time of its implementation Trinidad and Tobago society had undergone some significant changes, due largely to the influx of 'easy petroleum dollars' into the local economy, and in consequence of which project implementation was affected in several ways. Prices of land for school sites soared; labour costs escalated, and project management skills became problematic both to attract and to

retain. Implementation difficulties such as these might have been more cost-effectively solved perhaps by a change in project plan, but this line of action was not followed. 'Money is no problem' became the slogan of the day and schools were constructed at severely increased costs. There were huge cost overruns.

THE THIRD EDUCATION PROJECT

Trinidad and Tobago's Third Education Project was a joint venture between the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the World Bank. According to plan, the implementation time was 5 years. Total project cost was given as U.S.$54.62 million of which U.S.$20 million was loaned by the Bank. The remaining U.S.$34.62 million was to be contributed by the borrower, Trinidad and Tobago. As stipulated in the *Loan Agreement* (1722 TR) the main objectives of the project were as follows:

(a) construction, furnishing and equipping of 27 primary schools to replace obsolete and sub-standard schools (9320 places), two junior secondary[1] schools (2880 places), two composite secondary school extensions (384 places), six senior secondary school extensions (932 places), one National Curriculum and Teacher Development Centre (N.C.T.D.C.), and one Regional Teacher Development Centre (T.D.C.), and

(b) provision of technical assistance by way of 10 'man-years' of specialist services, 9.5 'man-years' of fellowships, and 10 'man-years' of project management services (World Bank, 1979).

For the sake of implementational convenience, however, three broad areas of project objectives were recognized: construction, together with furnishing and equipping of buildings; project management; and technical assistance. Some degree of failure was evident in the last two domains in the sense that objectives as stated were not altogether met, but it is in the construction sector where most of the funds were allocated that failure was accentuated. For the client, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the first objective — school construction, furnishing and equipping — constituted the primary purpose and *raison d'être* of the project, and as a result non-performance or under-performance in this area was interpreted as project failure. None of the primary schools was built; extensions to the senior secondary schools were never initiated and, with respect to the N.C.T.D.C. and the T.D.C., negotiations were not even finalized regarding orientation of these institutions to fit local needs.

The project was to be executed by a special implementational team, the Educational Facilities Management Unit[2] (E.F.M.U.) created as an arm of Trinidad and Tobago's Ministry of Education by Cabinet decree in 1979. Establishment of this *ad hoc* implementational unit was a strategic planning device, in conformity with World Bank stipulations. The main purpose of such an organization, according to Williams, is 'to bring together people and material in a cohesive organizational unit and motivate them in such a way as to carry out the organization's stated objectives' (1975, p. 554).

SOME EXAMPLES OF WHAT WENT WRONG AND WHY

Implementation of the Third Educational Project met with difficulties along seven fronts: project cost, primary education, construction of junior secondary schools, composite and senior school extensions, Teacher Development Centres, project management, and invasion by 'foreign' projects. The following areas have been isolated for particularly comment.

Project cost

Rapid escalation of prices was the main problem as regards project cost. When the loan agreement was signed (13 July 1979) estimated project cost was U.S.$54.62 million (of which the loan component was U.S.$20 million). When the project was re-estimated in October 1980 the cost had risen to U.S.$135 million, and in May 1981 this figure became U.S.$152 million. As a result of further escalation and implementational problems the estimated cost in March 1982 stood at U.S.$164.75 million. A comparison of project costs estimated at May 1979 and at February 1982 is given in Table 1.

Explanations for this dramatic increase in project costs have been offered. The Central

Table 1. Estimated cost of project: 1979 and 1982 (U.S.$ million)

Category	1979	1982	% increase
Civil works	38.12	127.50	234
Consultants' fees	4.49	18.22	308
Furniture, equipment and textbooks	9.57	15.58	63
Project management services	1.54	1.67	8.4
Technical assistance	0.9	1.67	85.6
Total	54.62	164.75	202

Source: Project files, Ministry of Education, Trinidad and Tobago, Port of Spain, 1979–1982.

Statistical Office (1983) argues that world economic inflation was at the time (of implementation of the project) at an all-time high, averaging about 14.8% in Trinidad and Tobago. Significant, however, was the reaction of the World Bank to the inflationary prices. Financial support for the project from the World Bank commensurate with the above increases was not forthcoming, and increased costs had to be borne by Trinidad and Tobago alone. In a communiqué to the government the World Bank declared its intention not to increase loan funds, but to hold World Bank participation in project cost constant (at the original figure of U.S.$20 million). This was the case in spite of an overall increase in cost to the tune of 202% (Table 1).

Primary education

On the primary education front there were three main problems. In the first place acquisition of sites for project schools was difficult. In Trinidad and Tobago site acquisition for construction of public facilities, including schools, can be a tedious and labyrinthine process. A 1982 ministerial report on the project explained that:

> Since the Loan Agreement was signed in July 1979, only six out of the twenty-seven primary school sites have been fully acquired and surveyed (topographical and cadastral). Acquisition procedures are holding up the design of four schools . . . for which consultants have been appointed, and cadastral surveys are still required for nine others.
>
> (Ministry of Education, 1982, p. 25)

The second problem had to do with validity of the respective demographic data. Enrolment figures for project schools, for example, changed between the time (1977) of the loan request and initiation of project implementation (1979). In consequence, additional demographic surveys were necessary in order to validate enrolment capacity for each proposed school. In another progress report it was commented that:

> In all cases it had been the practice before design commences to conduct investigation in the locality of the given school to determine the precise needs. The enrolment *and thus the size* of the new schools are tailored to suit the present and anticipated demands. The total revised enrolment resulting from this action is 8690, thus producing a saving of 790 places from the original estimate of 9480 places.
>
> (Ministry of Education, 1982, p. 3)

The third problem at the primary level concerned space standards for project institutions. Some difference existed between standards espoused by the government and those recommended by the World Bank. Government proposals were less generous, and were the result of local adjustments in education policy subsequent to signing of the loan agreement. The main changes in space standards were:

(a) reduction in individual classroom area,
(b) elimination of certain special-purpose rooms such as those for the teaching of science and handicraft,
(c) elimination of the multi-purpose area (to be used for assemblies and communal school activities),
(d) elimination of the library in schools of certain sizes, and,
(e) elimination of certain non-teaching areas

such as the Principal's office and staff room.

Construction of the primary school could not proceed until agreement was reached between the World Bank and the government regarding building and space standards to be adopted.

Reasons for difficulties in all of these areas of the primary education component are noteworthy. In the first instance suitable building sites became a rare commodity during the 'building boom' then in existence. Caught without a 'sites bank' which was recommended by a UNESCO planning mission (UNESCO, 1964), the Ministry of Education was hard put, not only to find potential sites for schools, but also to conclude lengthy administrative, legal land technical processes necessary for site acquisition. Secondly, validation of enrolment data became an imperative because of internal shifts in population since initial surveys were conducted. New housing estates sprang up and migration of people to urban and sub-urban areas in search of employment upset demographic patterns in many areas previously earmarked for school construction.

Thirdly, in the case of space standards the government believed that per student allocation of $1M^2$ was rather lavish, and would become a future economic liability to the Ministry of Education. Caution was sounded when downturn in the local economy leading to severe recessionary times appeared to be imminent. As a consequence space standards previously agreed to with the World Bank had to be renegotiated.

Project management

One of the major distinguishing features of the Third Education Project was the conditions which were imposed by the World Bank, and which had to be met before the loan could become effective. Loan effectiveness, that is, eligibility of the borrower (Trinidad and Tobago) to initiate and continue draw down of loan funds, was hinged upon two factors that had a significant bearing on project management. They were also contributory to project failure.

In the loan agreement it is stated that the borrower shall:

(a) establish and thereafter maintain in its Ministry of Education an Education Projects Implementation Unit (E.P.I.U.) in form and with powers, staffing and responsibilities satisfactory to the Bank; and,

(b) cause E.P.I.U. to be adequately staffed at all times and shall appoint to it on a full time basis a Director, a Project Architect or Engineer, a Quantity Surveyor or Cost Engineer, a Procurement Officer and an Accountant, all of whom shall be persons whose qualifications and experience and terms and conditions of service shall be satisfactory to the bank.

(World Bank, 1979a, p. 5

There were problems, however, in recruiting and retaining the above personnel. A ministerial review of the project explained that 'since its inception . . . the E.P.I.U. has experienced great difficulty in recruiting and retaining professional staff. The Accountant resigned after four months in the post, the Architect after five months and the Procurement Officer after three' (Ministry of Education, 1983). Staff retention problems such as these were met with dismay by the Bank, but such difficulties are not uncommon in some Third World societies. Bacchus (1989), for example, explains that in small nation states such as Trinidad and Tobago initiation of large scale projects is often frustrated by a shortage of trained personnel.

Recruitment and retention problems were manifest not only in the case of the indigenous E.P.I.U., but also in the case of the expatriate team (the Project Management Team). Here is the rationale given by the Bank for recruitment of the Project Management Team:

> During the project implementation period the E.P.I.U. (indigenous team) would be coached, trained and supported by a project management team, the costs of which would be financed by the project, to ensure the timely and effective implementation of the project and to help develop the necessary expertise for the E.P.I.U. to become self-sufficient and capable of managing the Ministry of Education's educational facilities investment programmes.
>
> (World Bank, 1979a, p. 25).

Thirteen months of project implementation time elapsed, however, before finalization of arrangements for engaging the Project Management Team. Main reasons for the delay were difficulties relating to the terms and conditions of engagement, legality of taxes to be paid, and clarification and interpretation of the laws of Trinidad and Tobago regarding the

ıtion's eligibility to employ an expatriate ım for project management services.

Although the 13 months lost were 're-ıemed' by an approval for extension of oject implementation time by the Bank, the ınsfer of technology envisaged in the loan reement could still not be adequately alized due to staffing problems in the unterpart E.P.I.U. In an *aide-memoire* from ; World Bank to the Ministry of Education it ıs pointed out that 'vacancies for key P.I.U. staff remained unfilled' and that this oblem 'has adversely affected the transfer of :hnology envisaged as a major component of : project' (World Bank, 1984).

oject overload

The problems experienced by the Third lucation Project were also the result of what ıy be described as 'project overload'. Apart m the project objectives outlined above, the P.I.U. was saddled with some additional ks too cumbersome for the Unit's already ıited human and technical resources. There s however no agreement between the Bank ı the Government regarding the use of the ?.I.U. to undertake additional programmes. : decision to assign extra implementation ks to the E.P.I.U. was therefore unilateral ɔy the Government.

The additional responsibilities assigned to E.P.I.U. were construction, furnishing and ıipping of:

five senior comprehensive schools, remnants of a former project locally referred to as the Short Term Building Programme;

annexes to four traditional government secondary schools, to provide additional student places;

three composite schools, remnants of the nation's Second Education Project which had recently been 'concluded' and;

three denominational primary schools under a special arrangement between the respective Church and the State.

ı addition the E.P.I.U. was charged with work necessary for upgrading and extend-facilities in several traditional grammar ols to allow for curriculum diversification :r what was known as Government's onal Model Education Programme.[3]

:asons for assignment of additional tasks ıe E.P.I.U. may be found in the political economy of educational planning in Trinidad and Tobago, as well as in relationships believed to exist between schooling and the state. At the time when additional projects were assigned popular support for the then government administration was low, and implementation of extra projects in spite of the limited implementation capacity of the Ministry of Education, appeared to be an urgent imperative. Failure of the Third Education Project, together with failure of the 'additional projects' may have been a contributory factor in the 1986 defeat of the People's National Movement (P.N.M.), the political party which at that time formed the government.

PLANNING AND PROJECT PERFORMANCE

The Third Education Project discussed above was planned using rationalistic logic, guided by a supposedly objective view of the world in which implementation was to proceed. Project objectives as outlined were sequentially and logically defined; the implementational machinery (for example, E.P.I.U./E.F.M.U.) was seen *a priori* as a trouble-free facility; financial and human resources were deemed adequate; and the project was to proceed 'as the plan directs'. Once the planning process was concluded there was little room for manoeuvre of project inputs. Implementation was construed as a linear process of change, following plan formulation and preceding project evaluation. Project success was to be defined only in terms of fulfilment of technically stated objectives.

Characteristics such as these conform to the canons of rationalistic planning and may become functional only if the social paradigm within which they reside permits. The circumstances of implementation in the Third Education Project were, however, far from what was expected. Project implementation was being attempted in an environment where there was dysfunctionality between planning ideology and implementation paradigm. The rationalist principles upon which the project was planned did not, and could not, fit into those elements believed to, but in fact did not, exist as reality in the implementational environment of the project. Implementation on the other hand was riddled with conflict, contradictions, delays and uncertainty, ele-

ments quite different from those anticipated in the rational approach used. 'Square peg in a round hole' is the local phrase which perhaps best describes this unfortunate mismatch.

CONCLUSION

One of the main causes of failure of Trinidad and Tobago's Third Education Project, therefore, is to be found in the principles of planning and implementation that were engaged. Not only this project, however, but some others in the Third World which have utilized large sums of local and foreign capital have also floundered for similar conceptual reasons. The failure has sometimes been lamented in this way:

> Something seems to have gone wrong with educational planning. Once acclaimed and propagated as one of the key strategies to overcome educational under-development in the countries of the Third World, it has now become a source of increasing frustration and the object of raising scepticism. Both the assumptions on which it was based and the models which guided its efforts have come in for serious questioning, and for some, the gap between the theory and practise of education planning has become so vast as to raise serious questions about the continued utility of this craft.
>
> (Weiler, 1982, p. 105)

In spite of observations such as these, planning and implementation of large scale education projects in the Third World very often proceed with insufficient regard for congruence between plan and social reality. Since the experience with the Third Education Project, local attempts have been made to adjust the planning models on which large scale education projects in Trinidad and Tobago are being based. This adjustment, it is believed, lies at the root of the success which the government claims the present I.A.D.B. project, mounted largely to 'pick up the pieces' from the Third Education Project, is currently experiencing. Many of the schools which the previous Third Education Project failed to deliver are now being built.

A major feature of the new project is the extent to which its plan anticipates the kinds of conflicts, contradictions and problems that might be expected in the Trinidad and Tobago society, and tries to engineer these when encountered towards successful project outcome. One example will suffice. Because of the intricacies of site acquisition, the exercise was withdrawn as normal civil service routine, and adapted as a citizens' responsibility. That is to say, a participatory approach rather than a predetermined official approach was used; but more important the method proved to be effective in accelerating the process of site acquisition. Acceleration translates into monetary savings, but more significant, leads to early delivery of the planned educational service.

Whatever the device used, and however defined, project success is nevertheless desirable. The need for success is also justified by reason of the large sums of money, local and foreign, public and private, that often go into project implementation. The problem for educational planners and project managers is to understand what Ravetz (1973) refers to as the 'pitfall phenomenon' which frequently rears its ugly head after project planning, and to be prepared to deal with it. According to Carlson and Awkerman, failures always 'result in a considerable waste of human energy and fiscal resources, from an efficiency and effectiveness point of view. Worse, yet, failed efforts breed disaffection for future planning efforts and negatively impact the morale of an organization' (1991).

There may be some good news, however. Provision of education services may not be hampered by project failure, but may be enhanced through engagement of those principles of planning that are more in conformity with realities of the local environment.

NOTES

1. In Trinidad and Tobago there are several models of secondary schools. There are the junior secondary, the senior comprehensive, the senior secondary, the government secondary, the composite, and the traditional secondary having a grammar school orientation. In the junior secondary students attend for three years followed by a minimum of two years in the senior comprehensive or senior secondary. In all other secondary schools attendance is for a minimum of five consecutive years.

2. E.F.M.U. and E.P.I.U. refer to one and the same Unit. The original designation, E.P.I.U., was changed by Cabinet decree to E.F.M.U. some time between project planning and commencement of implementation.

3. The National Model Programme gave effect to the government's policy of adding some technical subjects to the curriculum in grammar schools. Combination of existing academic subjects with technical subjects would impart to the new curriculum in grammar schools the diversity of knowledge, skills and opportunities found in comprehensive schools, and would result in a common curriculum for all secondary school students throughout the nation.

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